

JESUIT-KRAUSS-MCCORMICK LIBRARY



3 9967 00060 7668

# OLE RYNNING'S TRUE ACCOUNT OF AMERICA

TRANSLATED AND EDITED

BY

THEODORE C. BLEGEN



PUBLISHED BY

THE NORWEGIAN-AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

E184  
S2N829










PUBLICATIONS OF THE  
NORWEGIAN - AMERICAN HISTORICAL  
ASSOCIATION

BOARD OF EDITORS

Theodore C. Blegen, Managing Editor  
Knut Gjerset  
Kristian Prestgard

---

TRAVEL AND DESCRIPTION SERIES  
Volume I



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2025



TRAVEL AND DESCRIPTION SERIES

VOLUME I

OLE RYNNING'S TRUE  
ACCOUNT OF AMERICA

TRANSLATED AND EDITED

BY

THEODORE C. BLEGEN

LIBRARY OF  
THE NORWEGIAN-AMERICAN  
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

21749

PUBLISHED BY

THE NORWEGIAN-AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION  
MINNEAPOLIS, 1926

COPYRIGHT 1926 BY THE  
NORWEGIAN-AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION



E184  
.S2N829

## PREFACE

The volume herewith presented by the Norwegian-American Historical Association introduces a new series which is to bear the general title *Travel and Description Series*. It is to be made up of books and pamphlets written by Norwegian immigrants and travelers in America, most of which were originally published in Norway.

Materials of this kind have a many-sided interest. They contain contemporary descriptions of the various settlements established in the United States by Norwegian immigrants, and thus possess permanent value for the history of the Norwegian element in America. Not a few of the books deal generally with the United States, presenting accounts of American institutions and customs as viewed by Norwegians, and thus have a place in that large but relatively little exploited literature designated as general American travel and description.

One of the most interesting aspects of the books is their influence in Norway. In their original form they played an important part in the dissemination throughout Norway of information about America; they were read by thousands upon thousands of prospective emigrants; and they must be studied by the modern reader who wishes to understand the backgrounds of the vast emigration from Norway in the nineteenth century. Nor must it be forgotten that what was happening in Norway had its counterpart in many other countries of Europe. In other words, these Norwegian books and pamphlets are in many respects typical of the travel accounts, emigrant guides, and similar works that went to almost every part of Europe, contributing everywhere to the advertising of America among Europeans in the nineteenth century.

The Norwegian-American Historical Association therefore ventures to hope that this series will be of interest not only to

Norwegian-Americans but to all who are interested in the backgrounds of American immigration as a whole. In one of his stimulating essays Professor Arthur M. Schlesinger of Harvard University declares that "the two grand themes of American history are, properly, the influence of immigration upon American life and institutions, and the influence of the American environment, especially the frontier in early days and the industrial integration of more recent times, upon the everchanging composite population." It is believed that the "America books," — as Norwegians were wont to call works about that new world to which their compatriots were flocking, — are not without interest for the contributions that they make to our understanding of both of these "grand themes" in the story of America.

THEODORE C. BLEGEN

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
ST. PAUL

## CONTENTS

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
ORIGINAL NORWEGIAN TEXT: OLE RYNNING, SAND- FÆRDIG BERETNING OM AMERIKA, TIL OPLYSNING OG NYTTE FOR BONDE OG MENIGMAND . . . . .	25
ENGLISH TRANSLATION: OLE RYNNING, TRUE AC- COUNT OF AMERICA FOR THE INFORMATION AND HELP OF PEASANT AND COMMONER . . . . .	61





## HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION



## HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

In no European country, writes an authority on American immigration, "have the 'America letters,' emigrant guides, emigration agents, and newspapers from America played a more active part [*in the promotion of emigration*] than in the Scandinavian countries," and he declares that perhaps the most interesting of all the guidebooks is Ole Rynning's *True Account of America*.<sup>1</sup> This little book, published in Norway in 1838, was presumably the first of its kind to appear in that country, and there can be no doubt that "by its compact information and its intelligent advice"<sup>2</sup> and by its wide circulation it exerted a very important influence upon the early Norwegian emigration. Rynning wrote it after a stay of only eight months in America, but, as Professor Edward Channing has remarked, "it was the work of a keen observer."<sup>3</sup> The book is historically valuable as an example of a type of publication that carried to the remotest corners of Europe reliable reports of conditions in America in the first half of the nineteenth century. It is important for its special influence upon the emigration from Norway. And the story of Ole Rynning, its author, forms a highly interesting chapter not only in the saga of the coming of the Norwegians to the United States but also in that larger epic, the history of the American West.

Rynning's book appeared thirteen years after the sloop "Restaurationen" had brought to America the first contingent of the nineteenth-century immigrants from the western half of the Scandinavian peninsula. In the intervening period the earliest immigrants had struggled through their first pioneer-

<sup>1</sup> George M. Stephenson, *A History of American Immigration, 1820-1924*, 38 (Boston and New York, 1926).

<sup>2</sup> The phrase quoted is from Kendric C. Babcock, *The Scandinavian Element in the United States*, 40 (University of Illinois, *Studies in the Social Sciences*, vol. 3, no. 3, Urbana, 1914).

<sup>3</sup> Edward Channing, *History of the United States*, 5:469 (New York 1921).

ing in western New York. The famous pathfinder, Cleng Peerson, had found in the West—in the fertile Fox River valley of Illinois—a site for settlement to which many of the “sloop folk” and other early immigrants made their way, beginning in 1834.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, reports of the experiences and observations of the earlier immigrants had been sent back to communities in Norway. Letters such as those written by Gjert G. Hovland were copied and recopied in Norway, passed from one family to another, and thus given a wide circulation among people eager to know of prospects in America.<sup>5</sup> Many who hesitated to put their faith in such letters soon had an opportunity to hear from the lips of returned “America travelers” the fascinating stories of the New World. According to a Norwegian government report two of the earlier immigrants returned to Norway in 1835 to visit relatives, and “they reported that it was much better to live in America, that it was possible to live well in that country without much exertion and labor, that wages were higher, that it was not necessary there to eat oat bread and other such simple foods, but that everyone could have wheat bread, rice pudding, meat, and the like, in abundance. Such a Canaan . . . naturally would be welcome to many who in these regions have a wretched enough existence.”<sup>6</sup> It is not to be doubted that many Norwegians who found themselves contending with adverse economic conditions listened with eager

<sup>4</sup> See the writer's article, “Cleng Peerson and Norwegian Immigration,” in the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 7: 303-331 (March, 1921).

<sup>5</sup> A letter by Hovland, dated April 22, 1835, is translated into English and published with an introduction by the present writer under the title “A Typical ‘America Letter,’” in the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 9: 68-75 (June, 1922).

<sup>6</sup> “Angaaende Udvandringer til Fremmede Verdensdele,” in *Kongeriget Norges Ellefte Storthings Forhandlinger i Aaret 1845*, vol. 1, part 6, p. 24-25. Cf. the writer's article, “The Norwegian Government and the Early Norwegian Emigration,” in *Minnesota History*, 6: 121 (June, 1925); and Gunnar Malmin's “Norsk Landnam i U. S.,” in *Decorah-Posten* (Decorah, Iowa), December 19, 1924.



ears to tales which emphasized the bread and butter and the freedom of opportunity that America offered. Nor is there lacking evidence that the dissatisfaction with conditions in the old country was not limited to economic matters, but also in many cases touched general social and religious conditions to which America was believed to offer a refreshing contrast.

Though individuals occasionally set off for the El Dorado of the West to join their compatriots of 1825, it was not until 1836 that the experiment of an organized emigrant party was again tried. In that year, influenced particularly by the "America letters" and by the stories told by Knud Slogvig, who had returned to Norway the year before, two parties of immigrants took passage from Stavanger in ships that bore the characteristic names "Norden" and "Den Norske Klippe." After reaching the United States these pioneer immigrants went to the Illinois country, following the paths blazed by Cleng Peerson and his associates. That the migration was beginning to assume the proportions of a "movement" was made evident when in 1837 two more shiploads of immigrants sailed from Norway to America. Officials who had paid little attention to the antecedents of these group migrations now took alarm. The *amtmand* of Stavanger and Søndre Bergenhus were called upon by the government to investigate and report upon the situation, and the bishop of the diocese of Bergen issued a pastoral letter containing a stern philippic against emigration, taking as his text the Biblical admonition: "Stay in the land and support yourself honestly."<sup>7</sup> One shrewd Norwegian ventured to point out, however, that the good bishop failed to consider the passage: "Multiply and replenish the earth." This injunction, he said, "the *bönder* had adhered to; most of them had large families, and since the land at

<sup>7</sup> Gunnar J. Malmin, "Bishop Jacob Neumann's Word of Admonition to the Peasants," in Norwegian-American Historical Association, *Studies and Records*, 1:95-109 (Minneapolis, 1926). On the Stavanger report see Malmin, "Norsk Landnam i U. S.," in *Decorah-Posten*, December 19, 1924.

home was filled, while they now heard that a large part of the new world was unsettled, they decided to disobey the bishop's advice and go to the new Canaan, where flowed milk and honey."<sup>8</sup>

The two emigrant ships that sailed from Norway in 1837 were "Enigheden," with ninety-three passengers aboard, and the "Ægir," with eighty-four.<sup>9</sup> The former started from Egersund, a short distance south of Stavanger, then went to the latter port, and recruited its passengers largely from that city and the surrounding country. After a voyage of twelve weeks the ship docked at New York and most of the members of the party made their way to Illinois and the Fox River settlement. The "Ægir" sailed from Bergen on April 7, 1837, under the command of Captain Behrens, who in the previous year had made a voyage with freight to New York. While in New York he had evidently examined some emigrant ships — German and English — and had informed himself about American immigration laws and about proper accommodations for emigrants. Likewise from two German ministers returning to Germany aboard the "Ægir" he gained some knowledge of the German immigration to Pennsylvania. Upon his arrival at Bergen he learned that a considerable number of Norwegians were planning to emigrate, some of whom had already sold their farms preparatory to their departure. He therefore remodeled his ship for passenger service, and a contract was drawn up by the terms of which he was to take the party to America in the spring of 1837. Ole Rynning, who was destined to be the leader of this party, and who later, through the publication of his *True Account of America*, became one of the outstanding figures in the history of

<sup>8</sup> Knud Langeland, *Nordmændene i Amerika; Nogle Optegnelser om de norskes Udvandring til Amerika*, 22-23 (Chicago, 1889). The word *bonde* defies satisfactory translation. See G. Gathorne Hardy, *Norway*, 241 ff. (New York, 1925), for a good modern account of the *bonde* by an Englishman.

<sup>9</sup> See *post*, note 18.

Norwegian immigration, joined the party at Bergen after the agreement with Captain Behrens had been made and the arrangements on board completed. He had read a notice of the proposed voyage in a newspaper and had been in correspondence with the owner of the ship.<sup>10</sup>

Ole Rynning was born on April 4, 1809, in Ringsaker, Norway, the son of the Reverend Jens Rynning and his wife, Severine Cathrine Steen. The father was at that time curate in Ringsaker; in 1825 he became minister of the parish of Snaasen, where he remained until his death in 1857, being pastor emeritus in his later years. He appears to have been a man of considerable distinction, and was particularly noted for his writings in the fields of science and agriculture. Ole's parents desired him to enter the church, and in 1829 he passed the examinations for matriculation at the University of Christiania. In 1833, upon completing his work at the university, he gave up the thought of entering the ministry and returned to Snaasen, where he conducted a private school for advanced students. Knud Langeland declares that the immediate cause of Rynning's emigration was a betrothal on which his father looked with disfavor. Confirmation of this assertion is lacking, but a contemporary newspaper reports that Rynning's plan was to return to Norway, after he had established himself satisfactorily in America, to marry the young woman to whom he was engaged. It is believed by some that Rynning's father was of an aristocratic bent of mind and that serious differences in views existed between him and his son, who was thoroughly democratic and sympathized with the *bönder*. According to the statement of his nephew, Ole had made a contract to buy a marsh with two small adjoining farms for the sum of four hun-

<sup>10</sup> Langeland, *Nordmændene i Amerika*, 23-29. Langeland, an immigrant of 1843, had an interview with Captain Behrens in Bergen and bases a part of what he writes upon his recollection of Behrens' statements. His book, though written many years later, is a valuable source for numerous phases of the early immigration. In dates and figures it is unreliable but in other matters it can generally be depended upon.

dred specie dollars. As he was unable to raise this amount he decided to seek his fortune in the new world. It is probable that Rynning's case is typical of many in that his decision to emigrate was occasioned by a number of reënforcing motives.<sup>11</sup> It is possible that Rynning's motives were not purely personal, however, for the testimony of his fellow emigrants seems to show that he was interested in helping the economically circumscribed farmers and laborers of his native country to find a permanent solution for their difficulties; and emigration appeared to him to be the key to the problem. Certainly it was unusual for men of Rynning's class and education to join this movement, almost universally condemned as it was by the educated people of his day. A Christiania newspaper, *Morgenbladet*, made special comment on the fact that among the emigrants was "a student with the many-sided cultivation possessed by Ole Rynning." In this newspaper article, it may be noted incidentally, vigorous measures against emigration were advocated: "It is not enough that we admit that something is wrong; whoever can, must work against it, and with God's help the fire may perhaps be put out."<sup>12</sup>

Not all Norwegians are sailors, popular ideas to the contrary notwithstanding. Only two in the company of emigrants aboard the "Ægir" when it loosed its moorings at Bergen on

<sup>11</sup> Bernt J. Muus, *Jens Rynnings Æt*, 2, 8 (1894), and his sketch of Ole Rynning in Rasmus B. Anderson, *The First Chapter of Norwegian Immigration, 1821-1840*, p. 203-205 (Madison, 1895); articles on Jens and Ole Rynning in J. B. Halvorsen, *Norsk Forfatter-Lexikon 1814-1880*, vol. 4, p. 640-642 (Christiania, 1896); Langeland, *Nordmændene i Amerika*, 26; *Bergens Mercur*, September 16, 1837, as quoted by Malmin, "Norsk Landnam i U. S.," in *Decorah-Posten*, February 27, 1925. Rynning took up his university studies in 1830 and carried them as far as "Examen artium" and "Anden examen," which correspond approximately to the degrees of bachelor and master of arts. The standings that he secured in these examinations indicate that he was an excellent student. Paul Botten-Hansen, *Norske Studenter der har absolveret Examen Artium ved Christiania Universitet eller de artiumsberettigede Skoler*, 25 (Christiania, 1893).

<sup>12</sup> *Morgenbladet*, June 15, 1837, quoted by Malmin, in *Decorah-Posten*, February 27, 1925.



April 7, 1837, were recruited from outside the *bondestand*.<sup>13</sup> Many of this company of farmers were soon victims of seasickness, but, according to a newspaper report which gives details of the voyage, they were quickly restored to health through the experienced aid of the skipper, who acted as a physician though he possessed no "Doctor's cap," and particularly through the healing power of barley soup. The atmosphere of the voyage seems to have been merry. To quote the contemporary newspaper report: "With the seasickness all worries seemed to disappear. *Bönder* who never before had looked upon the sea saw it to be peaceful and lost their fear of its terrors as the ship sailed on toward milder skies. The fiddle was brought out and in the evening the sailors and the farmer folk gathered for a lively dance."<sup>14</sup> That some thought was given to more serious matters, however, may be inferred from the fact that at the outset of the voyage religious books were distributed among the company.<sup>15</sup>

Interesting both as a scene from an emigrant ship and for its connections with Ole Rynning is a celebration held in midocean on the seventeenth of May, the Norwegian national holiday. The day began with a salvo of cannon shots. The morning was spent by the emigrants — dressed in their best — discussing the land they had left behind them and the prospects of the future. At noon a banquet — probably a very simple one — was held, followed by *skaals* to the day, the native land, liberty, the king, and the king's son. Thereupon a song composed for the occa-

<sup>13</sup> *Den Norske Rigstidende*, April 13, 1837, quoted by Malmin, in *Decorah-Posten*, February 27, 1925. On the *bondestand*, see Hardy, *Norway*, 241 *et seq.*

<sup>14</sup> *Bergens Mercur*, September 16, 1837, quoted by Malmin, in *Decorah-Posten*, February 27, 1925. Langeland says that the captain of the ship put a stop to the dancing because the hobnailed boots of the *bönder* were too hard on the deck floor. *Nordmændene i Amerika*, 27-28.

<sup>15</sup> *Den Norske Rigstidende*, April 13, 1837, quoted by Malmin, in *Decorah-Posten*, February 27, 1925. This newspaper notice says that Amund Holland was responsible for the distribution of the religious reading matter.

sion was sung. In the evening the day's festivities were brought to a close with a dance.<sup>16</sup> Special interest attaches to the song sung after the dinner, for it was composed by Ole Rynning. His book and this verse are the only known writings from his hand. The verse is believed to be the oldest piece of poetry written by a Norwegian immigrant in the nineteenth century. In somewhat free translation it may be rendered as follows:

Beyond the surge of the vast salt waves  
 Deep hid lies Norway's rocky shore.  
 But longing yearns the sea to brave  
 For dim oak forests known of yore.  
 The whistling spruce and glacier's boom  
 Are harmonies to Norway's son.  
 Though destiny, as Leif and Björn  
 Call northern son to alien West,  
 Yet will his heart in mem'ry turn  
 To native mountains loved the best,  
 As longs the heart of a lone son  
 To his loved home once more to come.<sup>17</sup>

In midocean, on May 8, the vessel had a slight collision with the British ship "Barelto," but though the passengers were frightened, no great damage was done; and the "Ægir" arrived safely at New York on the evening of June 9.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> A report of the celebration appeared in *Bergens Mercur* for September 16, 1837, as quoted by Malmin, in *Decorah-Posten*, February 27, 1925.

<sup>17</sup> The earliest printed version of the Norwegian text of the song seems to be that in Langeland, *Nordmændene i Amerika*, 27:

Nu ligger Norges Klippeland  
 Saa dybt i Skjul bag salten Vove,  
 Men Længslen higer til den Strand  
 Med gamle, dunkle Egeskove,  
 Hvor Graners Sus og Jøklers Drøn  
 Er Harmoni for Norges Søn.  
 Men om end Skjæbnen bød ham der,  
 Som fordem Bjørn af Leif, at tjelde,  
 Han vil dog stedse have kjær  
 Sit gode gamle Norges Fjelde,  
 Og længes ømt, med sønlig Hu,  
 At se sit elskte Hjem endnu.

<sup>18</sup> The following notice appeared in the *New York Evening Star*, June 10, 1837, p. 2: "Marine Intelligence. Arrived last evening. Norwegian bark Aegir, Behrens, 62 ds fm Bergen, with 2 bls plants and 84 passengers,

Influenced by Slogvig and by letters from the Illinois country, the "Ægir" party intended to go to the settlement in La Salle County. At New York the immigrants took a steamer on the Hudson River for Albany, then went by canal boat from Albany to Buffalo, and from there continued their journey by way of Lake Erie to Detroit. The traveling expenses were greater than they had anticipated, and one of their number, Nils P. Langeland, having a large family and funds insufficient for continuing the journey, remained at Detroit.<sup>19</sup> Here two interesting and important pioneers of the Norwegian immigration movement joined the group of newcomers. These were the brothers Ole and Ansten Nattestad, who had reached New York by the way of Gothenburg and Fall River, Massachusetts, a few days after the arrival of the "Ægir." In his journal Ole Nattestad gives the following account of the meeting: "On the street I met one of the Norwegians who had sailed from Bergen on the seventh of April preceding. In the course of my conversation with him he said that there were about eighty persons of them, who were going to Chicago, and they had remained here five days without securing passage, but they were to leave in two days."<sup>20</sup> The upshot of the meeting was that the Nattestads joined the party.

to order May 8th, lat 39 34, lon 32 18 was run into by Br ship Barelto, fm Madras for London—both vessels received trifling damage." Some of the contemporary Norwegian newspapers speak of eighty-two passengers. See Malmin, in *Decorah-Posten*, February 27, 1925. The New York customs house list of the "Ægir" passengers contains eighty-three names. This list, edited by Henry J. Cadbury, will appear in volume 2 of the Norwegian-American Historical Association's *Studies and Records*. A report of the Norwegian-Swedish vice-consul at New York dated August 7, 1837, records the arrival of the "Ægir" and tells of the departure of the immigrants for Rochester. The report is quoted by Malmin in *Decorah-Posten*, December 19, 1924.

<sup>19</sup> Langeland, *Nordmændene i Amerika*, 28. For Langeland's later career, see George T. Flom, *A History of Norwegian Immigration to the United States* (Iowa City, 1909), 101, and Mons Aadland's account as given by Svein Nilsson in his "De skandinaviske Setlementer i Amerika," in *Billed-Magazin*, 1: 30.

<sup>20</sup> Ole K. Nattestad, *Beskrivelse over en Reise til Nordamerika, begyndt den 8de April 1837 og skrevet paa Skibet Hilda samt siden fortsat paa*

The boat to Chicago was uncomfortably crowded, and the immigrants suffered not a little inconvenience. Shortly after landing, they received from Norwegians reports unfavorable to the Fox River region, in which it had been their intention to settle. Many were discouraged, especially the women, and plans were changed. The suggestion of Beaver Creek, about seventy miles south of Chicago in Iroquois County, Illinois, as a site for settlement seems to have come from a couple of Americans, possibly land speculators, with whom Rynning talked in Chicago. Rynning at this time was particularly useful because he was able to speak English. Disappointed once, the company decided to proceed cautiously, and therefore delegated four men, whose expenses were to be paid by the party, to act as a committee of investigation. These men, Ole Rynning, Ingebrigt Brudvig, Ole Nattestad, and Niels Veste, walked south from Chicago and, after examining the land under consideration, chose a site at Beaver Creek. Ole Nattestad declared later that he did not approve of the site selected because it was too sandy and swampy. Leaving two of the committee at Beaver Creek to build a log house preparatory to the arrival of the immigrants, Rynning and Brudvig returned to Chicago to acquaint the party with the results of their investigation and to pilot its members to the place of settlement.

The land at Beaver Creek was favorably described by Rynning and his companion. Accordingly, oxen and wagons were purchased, and preparations made to leave Chicago. The company was now reduced in numbers to about fifty, some having gone to the Fox River region and others having dropped out at Rochester. The remainder made their way to Beaver Creek

*Reisen op igjennem de Forenede Stater i Nordamerika*, 11-13, 23 (Drammen, Norway, 1839). A translation of Nattestad's remarkably interesting book is published by Rasmus B. Anderson in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 1: 149-186 (December, 1917). Interviews with both Ole and Ansten Nattestad are given by Nilsson in *Billed-Magazin*, 1: 82-84, 94, 102-104; translated in part in Anderson, *First Chapter of Norwegian Immigration*, 238-253, 207, 216.



and began at once to prepare for the oncoming winter. Land was selected, and log houses were built in sufficient number to accommodate all.

No other settlers lived in the vicinity, and there was some dissatisfaction because of difficulty in securing supplies. Langeland states that the nearest mill was seventy miles away. For a time considerable grumbling was directed against Rynning and others who were responsible for the selection of the site; but when Ole Nattestad returned in the autumn from a short trip he found the colonists in good spirits. Later events proved, however, that a tragic mistake had been made. The ground, which was very low, had been examined in late summer, and, because of the dryness and the overgrowth of grass, the men had been deceived. As soon as spring came and the flat land of the settlement was under water, its swampy character was fully revealed; and the unfortunate settlers were in sore straits. To make matters worse, malarial fever swept the settlement. Sickness began to claim daily victims, and most of the settlers, including Ole Rynning, died. Some of the survivors removed to La Salle County in the spring of the following year, but a few remained. The last to leave was Mons Aadland. In 1840, finding his capital reduced to three dollars, he exchanged his farm for a small herd of cattle and went to Racine County, Wisconsin. In realizing something for his land he was more fortunate than most of his companions. They practically fled from the settlement, and could not sell their land. Few persons cared to buy land in a swampy, malarial region. "Only the empty log houses remained, like silent witnesses to the terrors of the scourge, and afforded a dismal sight to the lonely wanderer who ventured within these domains."<sup>21</sup> A Norwegian who in the spring of 1839 passed

<sup>21</sup>For accounts of the Beaver Creek settlement, see Nattestad, *Beskrivelse*, 23, 25-27; Langeland, *Nordmændene i Amerika*, 29-31, 32; Nilsson's reports of interviews with Aadland and the Nattestad brothers in *Billed-Magasin*, 1: 30, 84, 95; Anderson, *First Chapter of Norwegian Immigration*, 245-247; and contemporary newspaper reports quoted by Malmin, "Norsk Landnam i U. S.," in *Decorah-Posten*, February 27, 1925.

through the Fox River region wrote, "Here I met also some of the Norwegians who had emigrated by way of Bergen two years before and who first settled farther south in Illinois at Beaver Creek, but who, after student Rynning and many others died as a result of the unhealthful climate, fled from their houses and lands after having lost nearly everything they owned."<sup>22</sup> This traveler returned to Norway, and on October 26, 1839, his story was made public in *Morgenbladet* in Christiania, confirming an earlier report written by the father of Ole Rynning on September 4, 1839, in which he incorporated a letter from Hans Barlien, dated at "St. Fransville," Missouri, on April 23, telling about the death of the leader of the colony and the disaster which had overtaken the community.<sup>23</sup>

Rynning's personality left a deep impress upon the minds of those who knew him, and there are not a few testimonies to the inherent nobility and self-sacrificing nature of the man. One of the survivors of the settlement, Ansten Nattestad, is reported to have said of him: "He himself was contented with little, and was remarkably patient under the greatest sufferings. I well remember one time when he came home from a long exploring expedition. Frost had set in during his absence. The ice on the swamps and the crusts of snow cut his boots. He finally reached the colony, but his feet were frozen and lacerated. They presented a terrible sight, and we all thought he would be a cripple for life." In this condition Rynning wrote in the winter of 1837-1838 the manuscript of his *True Account of America for the Information and Help of Peasant and Commoner*. As soon as he completed a chapter of it, he would read it aloud to Nattestad and others, to get their opinions. There is something admirable in the picture of Rynning, sick and confined to his bed, writing a description of the conditions and

<sup>22</sup> "Peter Testman's Account of his Experiences in North America," in *Minnesota History*, 6: 110 (June, 1925).

<sup>23</sup> Malmin, in *Decorah-Posten*, February 27, 1925, quotes the *Morgenbladet* report of October 26, 1839. On the document by Ole Rynning's father, see *post*, note 34.

problems of life in the new world for the benefit of those in the old country who were considering seeking homes within its bounds. A Norwegian doctor who visited the western settlements in 1840 wrote an account of his observations for *Morgenbladet*, in which he tells of Rynning's activities and of his death. This writer asserts that if Rynning had lived, he would have altered considerably his account of America. This appears to be merely a conjecture that can neither be verified nor disproved. The remarkable thing, however, is that at the time when the book was written its author, though ill in a settlement that had already had more than a taste of misfortune, was able to rise above local circumstance and to view broadly the American situation that awaited the immigrant from Europe. It is possible that the critic of 1840 failed to do justice to the courage and the broad vision of Rynning. When he had regained his health, Rynning resumed his work among the colonists. At some time during the period he labored for a month on the Illinois Canal, then being dug. But in the fall of 1838 he "was again confined to the sick-bed," according to Nattestad, "and died soon thereafter to the great sorrow of all."<sup>24</sup> A pathetic incident is related which illustrates the deplorable conditions in the settlement at the time of Rynning's

<sup>24</sup> Nilsson, in *Billed-Magazin*, 1:95; Anderson, *First Chapter of Norwegian Immigration*, 208. The physician who visited the Norwegian settlements in 1840 was a Dr. Brandt. He ascribed Rynning's death to malaria followed by typhoid fever. In referring to the occasion when Rynning froze his feet, he writes: "In the middle of the winter he walked almost barefoot across a prairie; he was near his house, but he could not reach it without help; and he was almost frozen stiff when people found him and brought him home." Dr. Brandt states that some of the settlers owed money to Rynning and that they promptly forgot the debts after his death; and he reports that Rynning's personal effects were sold for cash. Dr. Brandt's statement, published in *Morgenbladet*, September 18, 1841, is quoted by Malmin, in *Decorah-Posten*, February 27, 1925. According to Johan R. Reiersen, Rynning's death was caused by unhealthy work on the Illinois Canal. *Vewiser for norske Emigranter til de forenede nordamerikanske Stater og Texas*, 151 (Christiania, 1844). Cf. English translation in Norwegian-American Historical Association, *Studies and Records*, 1:112.

death, — in the latter part of September, 1838. Only one person in the colony was well at the time. This man is said to have gone "out on the prairie and chopped down an oak and made a sort of coffin of it. His brother helped him to get the dead body into the coffin and then they hauled it out on the prairie and buried it." <sup>25</sup> Thus Ole Rynning lies in an unmarked grave.

To the philanthropic and helpful spirit of Rynning there are many witnesses. When the immigrants in Chicago received adverse reports of the Fox River region, they became completely dispirited. They had come from afar; they had ventured much; this region had been their goal. Little wonder that their courage was shaken! "But in this critical situation," says Ole Nattestad, "the greatness of Ole Rynning's spirit was revealed in its true light. He stood in the midst of those who were ready for mutiny; he comforted the despairing, counseled with those who were in doubt, and reproved those who were obstinate. He wavered not for an instant, and his coolness, dauntlessness, and noble self-sacrifice for the welfare of others calmed the spirits of all. The storm abated, and the dissatisfaction gave place to a unanimous confidence." Ansten Nattestad declares: "All his dealings proclaimed the philanthropist. I have never known any one with such noble principles and such a completely disinterested habit of thought. . . . A great and good idea formed the central point of all his thinking. He hoped to be able to provide the poor, oppressed Norwegian workman a happier home on this side of the sea, and to realize this wish he shunned no sacrifice, endured the greatest exertions, and was patient through misunderstandings, disappointments, and loss. . . . When sickness and suffering visited the colonists, he was always ready to comfort the sorrowing and to aid those in distress so far as it lay in his power. Nothing could shake his belief that America

<sup>25</sup> Muus, in Anderson, *First Chapter of Norwegian Immigration*, 204. The story was related to Muus by a Mrs. Davidson, at whose house Rynning lived most of the time.

would become a place of refuge for the masses of people in Europe who toiled under the burdens of poverty.”<sup>26</sup>

In the spring of 1838 Ansten Nattestad made a trip to Norway to visit friends and relatives, going by way of New Orleans and Liverpool. He took with him “letters from nearly all the earlier Norwegian emigrants” whom he had met, and was thus instrumental in disseminating in Norway much information about America. He carried with him also the manuscript of his brother Ole’s book entitled (in translation) *Description of a Journey to North America, begun April 8, 1837, and written on the ship Hilda, and also continued later on the trip up through the United States in North America*, which was published in Drammen in 1839;<sup>27</sup> and the manuscript of Rynning’s *True Account of America*, which was published in Christiania in 1838. In his preface Rynning explains that he has been in America eight months and is in a position to answer many of the questions raised by prospective emigrants. He recognizes the need of a “trustworthy and fairly detailed account of the country,” for he himself has learned in Norway “how great the ignorance of the people is, and what false and preposterous reports were believed as full truth.” His book contains thirteen brief chapters, each of which answers in a concise manner a question or group of questions put very specifically. There is conclusive evidence that Rynning prepared a fourteenth chapter which was stricken out in Norway before the book went to press. The fact is of special importance because the chapter in question dealt with the religious situation in Norway. Nattestad himself tells of it: “Dean Kragh in Eidsvold read the proofs, and struck out the chapter about the Norwegian ministers who were accused of intolerance in religious matters and of inactivity in respect to the improvement of the condition of the people in temporal matters and in questions concerning the advancement of education.”<sup>28</sup> It would be distinctly enlight-

<sup>26</sup> Nilsson in *Billed-Magazin*, 1: 84, 95.

<sup>27</sup> See *ante*, note 20.

<sup>28</sup> Nilsson in *Billed-Magazin*, 1: 94.



ening to have the testimony of so competent an observer as Rynning on the religious situation. The fact that he wrote such a chapter and that it was stricken out by a prominent clergyman of the state church points strongly to a larger part played by religious motives than has usually been recognized in connection with the emigration after 1825.

Among the *bönder* and workmen of Norway little was known of America in the thirties; consequently there was great eagerness to get definite information on the problems connected with the emigration, especially regarding prospects in the new land. Not a little light is thrown upon the situation by the following statement of Nattestad: "I remained in Numedal throughout the winter and until the following spring. The report of my return spread like wildfire through the land, and an incredible number of people came to me to hear news from America. Many traveled as far as twenty Norwegian miles<sup>29</sup> to talk with me. It was impossible to answer all the letters which came to me containing questions in regard to conditions on the other side of the ocean. In the spring of 1839 about one hundred persons from Numedal stood ready to go with me across the sea. Among these were many farmers and heads of families, all, except the children, able-bodied and persons in their best years. In addition to these there were some from Thelemarken and from Numedal who were unable to go with me as our ship was full. We went from Drammen direct to New York."<sup>30</sup> Rynning's account, together with the presence of Ansten Nattestad and the influence of Ole Nattestad's book and of the "America letters," had a considerable effect upon the emigration, especially from Numedal, a region in the southern part of Norway between Christiania and Hardanger. The two books, particularly Rynning's, "in which a scholarly and graphic account of conditions and prospects in the new world were [*sic*] presented, were quickly spread throughout

<sup>29</sup> A Norwegian mile is equivalent to seven English miles.

<sup>30</sup> Nilsson in *Billed-Magazin*, 1: 94.

Norway," writes Professor Rasmus B. Anderson, "and from this time on we may regard regular emigration from various parts of Norway as fully established, though emigrant packets do not appear to have begun to ply regularly until after 1840."<sup>31</sup>

Nilsson, relying on information supplied him by Gullik O. Gravdal, an immigrant of 1839, says of Nattestad's return to Norway and of the influence of Rynning's book: "Hardly any other Norwegian publication has been purchased and read with such avidity as this Rynning's *Account of America*. People traveled long distances to hear 'news' from the land of wonders, and many who before were scarcely able to read began in earnest to practice in the 'America-book,' making such progress that they were soon able to spell their way forward and acquire most of the contents. The sensation created by Ansten's return was much the same as that which one might imagine a dead man would create, were he to return to tell of the life beyond the grave. Throughout the winter he was continually surrounded by groups who listened attentively to his stories. Since many came long distances in order to talk with him, the reports of the far west were soon spread over a large part of the country. Ministers and bailiffs, says Gullik Gravdal, tried to frighten us with terrible tales about the dreadful sea monsters, and about man-eating wild animals in the new world; but when Ansten Nattestad had said Yes and Amen to Rynning's *Account*, all fears and doubts were removed."<sup>32</sup>

<sup>31</sup> *First Chapter of Norwegian Immigration*, 267. See also Flom, *Norwegian Immigration*, 103; Langeland, *Nordmændene i Amerika*, 87; Nilsson in *Billed-Magazin*, 1: 7, 94.

<sup>32</sup> *Billed-Magazin*, 1: 154. Anderson gives a typical example of the influence of Rynning's book. "In the winter of 1839 there was a party at the house of Mr. Gilderhus in Voss [a district in the western part of Norway near Bergen], and one man read aloud out of Ole Rynning's book. All listened attentively. It is said that wherever Ole Rynning's book was read anywhere in Norway, people listened as attentively as if they were in church. Several Vossings resolved to emigrate that year, and in obedience to instructions in Rynning's book all took guns or rifles with them to be prepared for all the wild game they expected to find in America." *First Chapter of Norwegian Immigration*, 331.

The report of Rynning's death and the pathetic end of the Beaver Creek colony probably dampened the ardor of prospective emigrants. Nilsson gives an interesting account by an eyewitness of the effect of Rynning's book and of his death upon the people of his home town. "For a time I believed that half of the population of Snaasen had lost their senses. Nothing else was spoken of than the land which flows with milk and honey. Our minister, Ole Rynning's father, tried to stop the fever. Even from the pulpit he urged the people to be discreet and described the hardships of the voyage and the cruelty of the American savage in most forbidding colors. This was only pouring oil upon the fire. Candidate Ole Rynning was one of those philanthropists for whom no sacrifice is too great if it can only contribute to the happiness of others. He was, in the fullest sense, a friend of the people, the spokesman of the poor and one whose mouth never knew deceit. Thus his character was judged, and his lack of practical sense and his helplessness in respect to the duties of life were overlooked. But then came the news: Ole Rynning is no more. This acted as cold water upon the blood of the people. The report of his death caused sorrow throughout the whole parish, for but few have been so commonly loved as this man. Now the desire to emigrate cooled also, and many of those who formerly had spoken most enthusiastically in favor of emigration now shuddered with fear at the thought of America's unhealthful climate, which, in the best years of his strength and health, had bereaved them of their favorite, 'Han Ola,' who had not an enemy, but a multitude of friends who looked up to him as to a higher being, equipped with all those accomplishments that call forth the high esteem and trust of his fellow citizens."<sup>33</sup>

When the father of Ole Rynning, in the fall of 1839, received his first intimation of the death of his son and of the tragedy which had befallen the Beaver Creek settlers, he published in *Morgenbladet* the letter containing the news, and added a number of annotations which made it evident that he

<sup>33</sup> *Billed-Magazin*, 1: 45.

doubted the truth of the report and clung to the hope that all was yet well with his son.<sup>34</sup> At the end of the communication he listed in tabular form the advantages and disadvantages of both Norway and America, and came to the conclusion that they were so evenly balanced "that none save speculators or those who are dissatisfied with the established order or are persecuted will be willing, when all is considered, to pay from seventy to eighty specie dollars to exchange their position here with one there." The comparison, coming from the pen of a well-known Norwegian clergyman who at the same time was the father of Ole Rynning, is worth noting in detail. The Reverend Mr. Rynning arranged his items in parallel columns, as follows:

## IN NORWAY

Freedom from taxes on land, so long as we have peace.

Since the Danish period such taxes have been unknown here.

Every man here has to work scarcely one day a year on the roads.

Good air.

Few or no snakes.

Here all the citizens of the state, in both of the united kingdoms, have practically all the essential human rights maintained by wise laws.

Here the grain often freezes in many districts.

## IN NORTH AMERICA

Everyone who has land that has been used more than five years must always pay a land tax.

Fifty per cent of all movable property.

Here every able-bodied man must work four days on the roads.

In right many regions very bad air.

An immense number of snakes, which here get into the very houses, and many of them are very poisonous.

Here in many states two-thirds of the people are slaves, who are bought and sold like cattle in Norway.

In the warmer regions it often happens that the grain is blighted or damaged by torrents.

<sup>34</sup> The letter was dated September 4, 1839, and appears in *Morgenbladet*, 1839, no. 283. It incorporates a letter from Hans Barlien dated April 23, 1839, at "St. Fransville," Missouri. A typewritten copy of the document, made from the printed version in *Morgenbladet* in the library of the University of Oslo, is in the possession of the Minnesota Historical Society.

## IN NORWAY

Here we have the sea on all sides much nearer than in America, and as regards Norway the most of the districts are either situated in coastal regions with deep fjords or else are not far from the coast.

Here are plenty of building materials.

Here all who will, live at peace with their fellow beings, safe under the protection of the laws.

The daily wages are small here and necessities cheap. Every well-behaved and industrious man can also here put something aside each year.

Since the normal ratio obtains here between the two sexes, everyone who is able to support a family can also easily find a wife.

There is no doubt that the Beaver Creek tragedy was widely reported in Norway and that the report tended to check the upward trend of the emigration movement for two or three years. Dr. George T. Flom, commenting on the lull in the emigration, suggests that the prospective emigrants, realizing the many serious difficulties that were connected with emigration, were simply awaiting favorable news from friends and

## IN NORTH AMERICA

Here they have the great Mississippi River, which at Barlien's place of residence is 230 Norwegian miles from the sea, at Beaver Creek somewhat farther away on that side, but here is also communication by water with all the regions around the Great Lakes and with the sea at New York. Still, the distance by land from here [*that is, from Beaver Creek to Chicago*] is ten Norwegian miles.

Here in many places both logs and stones are lacking, which therefore must be brought long distances.

Here they live in harmony with one another because every irreconcilable person can move out. As to the Indians, one is not sure of a lasting peace with them.

Those who can speak English well and who know a well-patronized trade can get good wages here. But everything that they need is expensive, so that the real earnings are on the one hand less than one might suppose, and on the other hand of less value than they would have in Norway.

Since about 150,000 people immigrate each year, most of whom are males, many must consequently live there in single blessedness.



relatives. The Rynning book was nevertheless distributed in some districts of Norway where no reports of the Beaver Creek colonists came; and, as Babcock says, "by its compact information and its intelligent advice, it converted many to the new movement."<sup>35</sup>

Rynning's *Sandfærdig Beretning om Amerika*, a booklet of thirty-nine pages, is now very rare. One copy is in the library of the University of Illinois. A photograph of the title page of this copy supplies the frontispiece to the present volume. Recently a second copy of the book was found in the library of *Det Kongelige Norske Videnskabers Selskab* at Trondhjem, Norway, and this copy has been loaned to the Norwegian-American Historical Association for use in connection with the preparation of the present volume. The text of the original as printed in the following pages is based upon this copy, photo-static reproductions of which are owned by the Norwegian-American Historical Association and the Minnesota Historical Society. In 1896 Professor Rasmus B. Anderson published a reprint of the book with the title *Student Ole Rynnings Amerikabog*, but the edition of the reprint was so small that copies of it are now almost as difficult to obtain as the original. A collation of the Anderson reprint with the copy in the possession of *Det Kongelige Norske Videnskabers Selskab* makes it evident that the reprint is based upon a second or later edition of the book. In the reprint the date of publication appears on the title page as 1839, instead of 1838, and its version of the text of Rynning's chapter 13 contains several paragraphs that are not in the 1838 edition.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Reiersen, *Veiviser*, 151 (translation in Norwegian-American Historical Association, *Studies and Records*, 1:112); Flom, *Norwegian Immigration*, 152; Babcock, *Scandinavian Element*, 37, 40.

<sup>36</sup> The reprint, brought out at Madison, Wisconsin, is a paper-bound pamphlet of fifty-six pages, with a preface of two pages, the original text, and a one-page appendix containing Rynning's poem. Though the Anderson reprint seems to contain conclusive internal proof that it is based upon an edition of 1839, which differs from the original 1838 edition, the present writer has been unable to locate a copy of the 1839 edition.

Several partial translations of the book have been made, and some years ago the present writer brought out in the *Minnesota History Bulletin* the first complete translation, together with an introduction and numerous annotations.<sup>37</sup> The present introduction and the translation that follows are based upon this earlier version, though the introduction has been rewritten in the light of new sources of information that have recently been found, and there are minor changes in the text, which has been compared throughout with the 1838 edition. In Rynning's chapter 13 as published below, both in the original and in the translation, the version of the 1838 edition is followed. A footnote to the Norwegian text gives the version printed by Anderson, and a footnote to the translation presents it in English. It remains to be said that in the present volume the original text and a complete translation of Rynning's *True Account of America* are brought together for the first time.

Professor Anderson himself says that his version was based upon a copy of Rynning's book loaned to him by Rynning's nephew, the Reverend Bernt J. Muus. The present writer had supposed that the Muus copy was the one that later came into the possession of the University of Illinois. But the Illinois copy is of the 1838 edition. It may therefore be conjectured that the copy obtained by Professor Anderson from Muus is not the Illinois copy. What has become of the copy owned by Muus?

<sup>37</sup> The title, preface, chapter headings, and part of chapter seven of the book are translated by Professor Anderson in his *First Chapter of Norwegian Immigration*, 208-215. Babcock, in his *Scandinavian Element*, 37-39, gives the preface and chapter headings in English and summarizes other portions. Flom in his *Norwegian Immigration*, 86, 103-107, gives an outline of the contents of the book and translates some passages. The complete translation referred to appears in the *Minnesota History Bulletin*, 2: 221-269.

ORIGINAL NORWEGIAN TEXT

OLE RYNNING

SANDFÆRDIG BERETNING OM AMERIKA,  
TIL OPLYSNING OG NYTTE FOR  
BONDE OG MENIGMAND



# Sandsfærdig Beretning

om

# A m e r i k a,

til Oplysning og Nytte for Bønde og  
Menigmand.

Forfattet af

En Norsk, som kom derover i Juni  
Maaned 1837.



Christiania.

1838.



Trykt i Guldberg & Dzwonkowski Officin ved P. T. Mallings

## FORORD.

Gode Landsmænd,

Bønder og Haandværkere!

Jeg har nu været otte Maaneder i Amerika, og har i denne Tid havt Anledning til at erfare Meget, hvorom jeg forgjæves søgte at indhente Oplysning, førend jeg forlod Norge. Jeg følede ved hiin Leilighed, hvor ubehageligt det er for dem, som ville udvandre til Amerika, at de maae savne en paalidelig og nogenlunde udførlig Beretning om Landet; jeg erfarede ogsaa, hvor stor Folks Uvidenhed er, og hvilke falske og urimelige Rygter der troedes som fuld Sandhed. — I nærværende lille Skrift har det derfor været min Bestræbelse at besvare ethvert Spørgsmaal, som jeg selv opkastede, at oplyse ethvert Punkt, hvorom jeg mærkede, at Folk [*p. vi*] vare i Uvidenhed, og at gjendrive de falske Rygter, som ere komne mig for Øre, dels før min Afreise fra Norge, dels efter min Ankomst hid. — Jeg vil ønske kjære Læser! at Du ikke maa finde nogen Post, hvorom du ønskede Oplysning, forbigaaet eller ufuldstændig behandlet!

Illinois, d. 13de Februar 1838.

OLE RYNNING.



## INDHOLD.

	Side.
1. Paa hvad Kant ligger Amerika for Norge, og hvor langt er det derhen? . . . . .	1.
2. Hvorledes er dette Land først bleven bekjendt? . . .	3.
3. Hvordan er dette Land i det Hele beskaffent, og hvad er Aarsagen til, at saa mange Folk reise did, og vente at finde Levebrød der? . . . . .	7.
4. Er det ikke at befrygte, at Landet snart vil blive for meget opfyldt med Folk?—Er det sandt, at Regjeringen der vil forbyde flere Folk at komme? . .	8.
5. I hvilken Deel af Landet have de Norske nedsat sig? Hvilken er den beqvemmeste og billigste Vei til dem? . . . . .	11.
6. Hvorledes er Landets Beskaffenhed, hvor de Norske have nedsat sig? Hvad koster en god Jordvei der? Hvilke ere Priserne paa Creature og Levnetsmidler? Hvor høi er Daglønnen? . . . . .	13.
7. Hvad Slags Religion er der i Amerika? Er der nogen Slags Orden og Regjering i Landet, eller kan Enhver gjøre hvad han lyster? . . . . .	21.
8. Hvordan er der sørget for Børnelærdommen og for de Fattige? . . . . .	25.
9. Hvilket Sprog tales i Amerika? er det vanskeligt at lære? . . . . .	26.
10. Er det farligt med Hensyn til Sygdomme i Amerika? Har man noget at befrygte af vilde Dyr eller af Indianerne? . . . . .	27.
11. For hvad Slags Folk er det raadeligt at reise til Amerika, og for hvem er det ikke raadeligt? — Advarsel imod urimelige Forventninger . . . . .	28

12. Hvilke Farer kunne især møde paa Havet? Er det sandt, at de, som føres til Amerika, blive solgte som Slaver . . . . . 32.
13. Veiledende Raad for dem, som ville reise til Amerika. Hvorledes de skulle hyre et Skib; hvorledes de skulle vexle deres Penge, hvilken Tid og Vei er den beqvemmeste; hvad man bør medtage . . . . . 34.



BERETNING  
OM  
AMERIKA.



1. Paa hvad Kant ligger Amerika for Norge, og hvor langt er det derhen?

Amerika er en særdeles stor Verdensdeel, som ligger vestlig fra Norge. Det strækker sig omtrent 1300 Mile fra Nord mod Syd, og bestaaer af to Hoveddele, som alene hænge sammen med en smal Jordtange. Hvad der ligger Nord for denne Tange, kaldes Nordamerika, og hvad der ligger Syd for Tangen, kaldes Sydamerika. Enhver af disse Dele indeholder mange Landskaber, som ere ligesaa forskellige i Navne, Regjering og Beliggenhed, som Norge og England, eller Norge og Spanien. Naar Du altsaa hører om at reise til Amerika, maa Du spørge: "Til hvilken Deel af Amerika? og til hvilket Landskab der?" — Den vigtigste Stat i hele Amerika saavel med Hensyn til Folkemængde som Frihed og lykkelig Forfatning er "de forenede Stater" i Nordamerika. Derfor er det almindelig ogsaa dette Landskab, som menes, naar Du hører Nogen paa en ubestemt Maade at [p. 2]<sup>38</sup> tale om Amerika; hid er det, at dine Landsmænd ere udvandrede; og dette Land or det, som jeg nu vil beskrive.

"De forenede Stater" ere altsaa beliggende omtrent sydvest for Norge. For at komme did maa Du seile over et Hav, som er omtrent 900 norske Mile bredt. Med føielig Vind og paa et Skib, som seiler godt, kan du komme over paa mindre end en Maaned; men den sædvanlige Tid er 9 Uger, undertiden lidt mere, undertiden mindre. Vinden er nemlig for det Meste vestlig, og altsaa imod, naar du vil reise til Amerika. Efter Veirets Beskaffenhed gaaer man stundom nordenom Skotland, som er den korteste Vei, stundom gjennen Kanalen mellem England og Frankrige.

Da Amerika ligger saa langt mod Vest, have de der noget over sex Timer senere Middag end i Norge. Solen løber —

<sup>38</sup> The page numbers of the original are shown in brackets.

efter den almindelige Maade at tale paa — Jorden rundt i 24 Timer, som vi dagligen erfare; sex Timer er altsaa Fjerdedelen af dens Omløbstid, hvoraf vi slutte, at der fra Norge til Amerika er en Fjerdedeel af hele Jordens Omkreds.

[p. 3.] 2. **Hvorledes er Landet først bleven bekjendt?**

Af de gamle Sagaer sees tydeligt, at de Norske alt kjendte Amerika før den sorte Død. De kaldte Landet Viinland Gode, og fandt, at det havde lave Kyster, som overalt vare bevoxede med Skov. Ikkedestomindre var her dog Mennesker alt paa den Tid; men de vare vilde, og Normændene æstimerede dem ikke mere, end at de kaldte dem "Skrællinger." Efter den sorte Død, 1350, glemte de Norske Veien til Viinland Gode, og Æren for Amerikas Opdagelse tilskrives nu Christopher Columbus, som fandt Veien did i Aaret 1492. Han var dengang i spansk Tjeneste, hvorfor ogsaa den første Fordeel af denne vigtige Opdagelse tilflød Spanierne.

Da Dronning Elisabeth regjerede over England, blev først den vestlige Kyst af Nordamerika beseilet af Engelskmænd, og Walter Raleigh stiftede den første engelske Kolonie her, som han kaldte Virginia. Efterhaanden stiftedes flere Kolonier af forskjellige Nationer. Nogle Norske anlagde ogsaa 1624 en liden By, som de kaldte Bergen, i den Deel af Landet, som nu kaldes New-Yersey. Engelskmændene beholdt dog Overvægten, og under dem stod Landet indtil 4de Juli 1776, da det skilte sig fra England, og gav sig selv en fri Regjering uden Konge. Siden den Tid er det næsten utroligt, [p. 4] hvor hurtigt Landet har taget til i Rigdom og Folkemængde.

I 1821 kom en Person, ved Navn Kleng Peersen, fra Stavanger Amt i Norge over til Nyjork i de forenede Stater. I 1824 var han en Snartour tilbage til Norge, og ved hans Beretninger om Amerika vakte hos Flere Lysten at reise didhen. Et Udvandringsselskab paa 52 Personer kjøbte en liden Slup for 1800 Spd. som de lastede med Jern for at gaae til Nyjork. Skipperen og Styrmanden vare selv deelagtige i denne Spekulation. De passerede gennem Kanalen og løbe

ind i en liden Udhavn paa Kysten af England, hvor de begyndte at sælge Brændeviin, som der er en forbuden Vare. Da de mærkede, hvilken Fare de derved havde udsat sig for, maatte de i største Hast igjen søge tilhavs. Formedelst Skipperens Uvidenhed eller Modvind kom de saa langt Syd, som til Madeirøerne. Her fandt de en Tønde Madeiraviin svømmende paa Havet, hvilken de halede til sig og begyndte at pumpe og drikke. Da hele Mandskabet var beskjenket, kom Skibet drivende som et Pestskib ind i Havnen, uden Kommando og uden at heise Flag. En Bremer, som laae paa Reden, raabte til dem, at de øieblikkelig maatte heise Flag, dersom de ikke vilde hilses af Fæstningens Kanoner, som virkelig alt vare rettede mod dem; og nu fik omsider en af Passagererne Flaget fat [p. 5] og fik det heiset. Efter disse og flere Farer naaede de endelig Nyjork i Sommeren 1825. De havde i det Hele været 14 Uger fra Stavanger til Amerika, som er den længste Tid, jeg veed nogen Norsk har været underveis. Imidlertid var ingen død paa Søen, og alle Mand vare friske ved Landing-en. I Nyjork vakte det almindelig Forundring, at de Norske havde vovet sig over det vide Hav paa saa lidet et Fartøi, hvilket hidtil var uhørt. Af Uvidenhed eller Misforstaaelse havde man bemandet Skibet med flere Mand, end de amerikanske Love tillade, hvorfor der blev lagt Arrest paa Skipper og Skibet med dets Ladning. Nu kan jeg ikke med Vished fortælle, enten Regjeringen af sig selv hævede Arresten, i Betragtning af vore gode Landsmænds Uvidenhed og barnagtige Fremfærd, eller om Qvækerne alt nu havde taget sig af dem; nok er det: Skipperen slap fri, og Skib og Ladning gaves Eierne tilbage. De tabte dog betydeligt ved sammes Salg, som ikke indbragte dem Mere end 400 Daler. — Skipperen og Styrmanden nedsatte sig i Nyjork. De Øvrige fik ved Qvækernes Sømmenskud Hjælp til at komme længer op i Landet. To af Følget, som vare Qvækere, nedsatte sig i Rochester. Een af disse, ved Navn Lars Larsen, boer endnu der. De Øvrige kjøbte sig Land 5 Mile nordvest for Rochester i Morri. Her maatte de give fem Daler for

Ækkeren; men da de ikke havde [*p. 6*] Penge til at betale med strax, skulde Betalingen erlægges terminviis i ti Aar. Enhver kjøbte omtrent 40 Ækker. Landet her var tæt bevokset med Skov og tungt at rødde. De første 4 a 5 Aar vare derfor meget møisommelige for disse Folk. De lede ofte stor Nød og ønskede sig kun tilbage til Norge; men de saae ingen Mulighed til at komme der, uden at opofre den sidste Skjærv af deres Formue, og de vilde ikke komme tilbage som Tiggere. Dog — velgjørende Naboer understøttede dem, og ved egen Flid fik de omsider deres Jord i saadan Stand, at de kunde leve af den, og leve bedre, end i deres gamle Fødeland. — Ved deres Breve opmuntredes nu flere norske Bønder til at søge deres Lykke i Amerika; men de reiste kun enkeltviis, og toge almindelig Veien over Gøtheborg i Sverige, hvorfra der ofte gives Leilighed til de Forenede Stater. En af dem, som gik denne Vei, en Mand ved Navn Gjert Gregoriussen Hovland, skrev adskillige Breve tilbage til sine Venner i Norge, hvilke Breve bleve mange Gange afskrevne og omsendte til mange Bygdelaag i Bergens Stift. I 1835 var ogsaa En af de først Udvandrede, en Ungkarl ved Navn Knud Slagvigen, en Tour tilbage til Norge, og Mange reiste lange Veie allene for at tale med ham. Saaledes begyndte Amerika at blive mere og mere bekjendt for Bonde og Menigmand i Bergens og Christianssands Stifter. Følgen heraf var, at der i 1836 [*p. 7*] gik to Skibe med Udvandrede fra Stavanger, og i 1837 eet fra Bergen og eet fra Stavanger, foruden Mange, som gik om Gøtheborg eller om Hamburg. — Den allerstørste Deel af dem, jeg hidtil har talt med, finde sig vel fornøjede med deres nye Fødeland.

3. Hvordan er dette Land i det Hele beskaftet, og hvad er Aarsagen til, at saa mange Folk reise did, og vente at finde Levebrød der?

De Forenede Stater er et meget stort Landskab, meer end 20 Gange saa stort, som hele Norge; den meste Deel af



Landet er fladt og dyrkbart; men da dets Udstrækning er saa stor, er der ogsaa stor Forskjel med Hensyn til Veirets Mildhed og Jordbundens Godhed. I de østligste og nordligste Stater er Klimat og Jordbund ikke bedre end i det sydlige Norge; i de vestlige Stater derimod er Jorden for det meste saa fed, at den bærer ethvert Slags Korn uden Gjødelse; og i de sydlige Stater avles endog Sukker, Risengryn, Tobak, Bomuld og flere Ting, som udfordre en stærk Varme.

Det er en almindelig Tro iblandt Menigmand i Norge, at Amerika for nogle Aar siden har været vel befolket, og at en Pest — omtrent som den sorte Død — har lagt Landet øde for Folk. I Følge heraf tro de, at de, som udvandre til Ame-[p. 8]rika, ville finde oprøddede Gaarde, Huse, Klæder og Indbo færdige for dem, Alt i den Stand, som som [*sic*] de forlodes af de forrige Eiere. Dette er en falsk Indbildning\*). Denne Deel af Amerika var, da Landet først opdagedes, allene beboet af enkelte vilde Nationer, som levede af Jagten. De gamle Indbyggere trængtes mere og mere tilbage, da de ikke vilde vænne sig til et ordentligt Liv og Arbeidsomhed; men endnu er den største Deel af Landet ikke engang paabegyndt at dyrkes og beboes af kultiverede Folkeslag.

4. Er det ikke at befrygte, at Landet snart vil blive for meget opfyldt med Folk? — Er det sandt, at Regjeringen der vil forbyde flere Folk at komme?

Ovenfor er allerede omtalt, at de Forenede Stater i Udstrækning ere mere end 20 Gange saa store, som Norge, og at den største Deel af Landet ikke engang er paabegyndt at dyrkes. Tage vi nu [p. 9] hertil i Betragtning, at næsten hver

\*) [p. 8] Jeg vil dog ikke benægte, at de Forenede Stater langt tilbage i Tiden maaskee have været beboede af en anden og mere kultiveret Folkestamme, end de vilde Indianere, som nu almindelig ansees for Landets første Indbyggere. Jeg har nemlig seet gamle Gravhøje her, som ligne de norske Kjæmpehøje, og Amerikanerne [p. 9] have fortalt mig, at man ved at grave i saadanne har fundet baade Menneskebeen af usædvanlig Størrelse, og adskillige Vaaben og Redskaber af Jern, som vidne om en højere Kultur end Indianernes. Det er ogsaa mærkværdigt, at Indianerne selv ikke kjende Oprindelsen til disse Gravhøje.

Fodsbred af de Forenede Stater er dyrkbart Land, medens der største Deel af Norge bestaaer af ufrugtbare Fjelde, og at Amerika formedels sin sydlige Beliggenhed er rigere paa Produkter til Menneskers Underholdning end Norge; saa kunne vi uden Overdrivelse antage, at de Forenede Stater kunde modtage mere end 100 Gange saa mange Mennesker, som der findes i hele Norge. Nu er det rigtignok en Sandhed, at der aarlig strømme hundrede tusinde Mennesker did fra forskjellige andre Lande af Europa, men alligevel er det ikke at befrygte, at Landet vil blive opfyldt i de første 50 Aar. Da vi vare i Nyjork sidste Sommer, ankom der daglig flere Tusinde Indvandrende fra England, Tydskland, Frankrige o. fl. St. Mange betænkssomme Mænd i vort Følge bleve derved modfaldne, og troede, at hele Landet nu vilde blive fuldt med een Gang; men de fandt snart, at denne Frygt var overflødig. Mange toge rigtignok op gjennem Landet tilligemed os; men de adspredte sig meer og meer, og førend vi kom til Illinois, var der ikke een eneste af dem i vort Følge.

[p. 10] Førend min Afreise fra Norge hørte jeg det Rygte, at Regjeringen i de Forenede Stater ikke vilde tillade Flere at indvandre did. Dette Rygte er falskt. Den amerikanske Regjering ønsker netop, at arbeidsomme, driftige og sædelige Folk ville indvandre til dem, og derfor har den heller ikke ladet noget Forbud udgaae i denne Henseende. Men sandt er det, at Regjeringen her gjerne vilde forhindre, at Indvandrende ved deres Ankomst til Landet strax falde Søstædernes Indvaanere til Byrde ved deres Tiggerier \*). En stor Deel af dem, som indvandre til Amerika, ere nemlig fattige Folk, som ved Landingen neppe have saa Meget i Behold, at de kunne kjøbe et Maaltid Mad for dem selv og deres Familie. I hvor gode Udsigter her virkelig er for den fattige Arbejder

\*) [p. 10] I Norge skal det Rygte være udspreddt, at de, som i 1836 udvandrede fra Stavanger, have været nødtte til at gaae om i Amerika og tigge, for at samle Reisepenge tilbage til Norge; men efter Alt, hvad jeg har spurgt og hørt, er dette en reen Usandhed. Jeg har talt med de Fleste, som kom over i 1836, og alle havde kommet sig meer eller mindre godt.

i Amerika, saa vilde det dog være for meget at vente, at han allerede den første Dag, han betræder amerikansk Jordbund, skulde faae Fortjeneste, især i Søstæderne, hvor der daglig ankomme saa mange Tusinde, som søge Arbeide. Hans eneste Tilflugt er altsaa at tigge. For at [p. 11] hindre dette fordrer Regjeringen en Afgift af hver Person, som lander i Amerika for at nedsætte sig der. Ved denne Afgift bestrides Udgifterne til adskillige Fattighuse, som alene ere oprettede for fattige Indvandrende. De, som strax tage længer ind i Landet, slippe med at betale mindre, end de, som forblive i Søstæderne, fordi hine lettere kunne faae Arbeide, og føde sig selv.

Da vi landede i Nyjork, var hiin Afgift der  $2\frac{1}{2}$  Dollars; men der taltes om, at den vilde blive høiere. Paa nogle Steder er Afgiften 10 Dollars.

Ikke alle Nationers Indvandrende ere lige godt antagne af Amerikanerne. Fra Irland komme her aarlig en Mængde Pak, som ved deres Drikfældighed, Slagsmaal og Skjælmerier gjøre sig almindelig forhadte. En skikkelig Irlænder tør neppe være sig sit Nationalnavn bekjendt. De Norske i Almindelighed have hidtil et godt Rygte for deres Arbeidsomhed, Troværdighed, og den Beredvillighed, hvormed de mere Formuende have hjulpet de Fattigere op gjennem Landet.

##### 5. I hvilken Deel af Landet have de Norske nedsat sig? Hvilken er den beqvemeste og billigste Vei til dem?

Norske findes omspredte paa mange Steder i de Forenede Stater. I Nyjork, Rochester, Detroit, [p. 12] Chicago, Philadelphia, Nyorleans skal man træffe enkelte Norske. Dog veed jeg kun 4 a 5 Steder, hvor flere Norske paa een Gang have nedsat sig. Disse Steder ere: 1) Morri Town, Orleans County, Nyyork State, hvor jeg alt har fortalt, at det første Indvandringsselskab af Norske nedsatte sig i 1825. Der ere nu kun 2 a 3 Familier tilbage, de øvrige ere dragne længer ind i Landet, hvor de have nedsat sig i 2) La Salle (Læsæl)

County, Illinois State, ved Foxriver, omtrent  $1\frac{1}{2}$  norsk Miil N. O. for Byen Ottawa, og 11 a 12 Mile vestenfor Chicago. Her boe 16 a 20 Familier af Norske. Denne Coloni stiftedes i 1834. 3) White County, Indiana State, omtrent 10 norske Mile S. for Michigan Sø ved Tippocanoeriver. Her boe endnu kun to Norske fra Drammen, som tilsammen eie henved 1100 Ækker Land; men i Nærheden af dem er endnu godt Land ledigt. 4) Shelby County, Missouri State, hvor en Deel Norske fra Stavanger, nedsatte sig om Vaaren 1837. Jeg veed ikke, hvor mange Familier der ere, 5) Iroqvis County, Illinois State, ved Elvene Beaver (Béver) og Iroqvis (Eiro-qvéis). Her nedsatte sig en stor Deel af dem, som kom over sidste Sommer. Her ere nu 11 a 12 Familier.

Det er almindeligt, at de Norske helst søge did, hvor de vente at finde Landsmænd; men det er altid vanskeligt at finde godt Land ledigt i Nærheden af dem, som ere indvandrede eet eller to Aar i Forveien.

[p. 13]

6. Hvorledes er Landets Beskaffenhed, hvor de Norske have nedsat sig? Hvad koster en god Jordvei der? Hvilke ere Priserne paa Kreature og Levnetsmidler? Hvor høi er Daglønnen?

I de vestlige Steder, hvor nu alle de norske Indvandrende søge hen, er Landet meget fladt og lavt. Jeg havde forestillet mig, at tætte Skove maatte skjule den Deel af Landet, som ikke endnu er begyndt at ryddes; men jeg fandt det ganske anderledes. Man kan her reise to a tre Mile over naturlige Egne, som ere bevoxede med det frodigste Græs, uden at møde et eneste Træ. Saadanne naturlige Egne kaldes her Prærier (Prairies). Fra den tidligste Vaar indtil den sildigste Høst ere Prærierne bevoxede med de forskjelligste Blomster. Hver Maaned antage de en ny Dragt. De fleste af disse Planter og Græsarter ere ubekjendte i Norge, eller findes alene hist og her i fornemme Folks Haver.

Prærierne ere en stor Herlighed for Nybyggerne. Det koster dem Intet her at havne deres Creature og samle Vinterfoder for dem. Paa mindre end to Dage kan en duelig Arbejder slaae og rage Vinterfoder for en Ko. Dog ansees Præriegræsset ikke saa godt som tamt Hø af Timothei og Klever. Jordbunden paa Prærierne er almindelig fed, og fri for Stene og Trærødder. Til at brække Ager behøves derfor allene en stærk Ploug og fire *a* fem [*p. 14*] Par Oxe, hvormed een Mand kan oppløje 1 *a* 2 Ækker Prærie om Dagen. Uden at gjødsles bærer Jorden Korn (Maiz) Hvede, Boghvede, Havre, Potetes, Næper, Gulerødder, Meloner o. a. m., som her udgjør Landets Avling. Korn ansees som den fordeelagtigste Sæd, og giver 12 *a* 24 Tønder pr. Ækker. Havren og en stor Deel af Kornet gives alene til Hestene og Kreaturerne; Hvedemeel er det meste, som bruges til Menneskespise. Byg og Rug dyrkes vel paa enkelte Steder, og trives godt, men jeg har endnu intet seet af disse Kornarter. Bygget bruges ligesom Havren, alene til Kreaturfoder. Øl haves her ikke, og det Meste af Melken gives til Kalve og Sviin. Til Frokost og Aftensmad hører altid Kaffe eller The, men for Resten drikkes her kun koldt Vand. — Efter den Priis, som Øl har i Chigago, kunde en Tønne Øl her bringes ud til 20 Daler.

I dette Land koster det Intet at holde Sviin. De føde sig selv baade Vinter og Sommer, kun at man giver dem saa meget, at de ikke forvildes. Dette skeer dog alligevel ofte, saa at man mangesteds kan see hele Flokke af vilde Sviin, som jages, ligesom andet Vildt. — Da det her koster saa lidet at holde Sviin, er det ikke sjeldent, et een Mand kan have 50 *a* 100 Stykker. Derfor spises her ogsaa Flesk næsten til hvert Maaltid.

[*p. 15*] Det er naturligt, at et Land, som er saa lidet befolket, har en stor Overfløddighed af Vildt. Indianerne, som før beboede dette Land, levede alene af Jagten. Naar en Nybygger er forsynet med en god Rifle og forstaaer at bruge den, behøver han ikke at kjøbe Suulvarer de første Par Aar. En god Rifle



koster her 15 a 20 Dollars. Det fornemste Vildt er Hjort, Præriehøns, Kalkuner, Ænder og Vildgjæs. Her findes ogsaa vilde Bier. Floderne ere rige paa Fisk og Skildpadder.

Illinois og de andre vestlige Stater ere vel skikkede for Frugtavl. Æbletræet bærer i femte a sjette Aar efter at det er plantet af Kjerne, og Piitsch- eller Pferskentræet allerede i andet eller tredie Aar. Det er en god Forholdsregel, at man allerede i første Aar sørger for en Frugthaves Anlæg. Unge Æbletræer koste 3 a 6 Skilling Stykket. Af vilde Frugttræer vil jeg alene nævne *Dverghasselen*, som sjelden er høiere end en Mand, og den sorte Bringebærbusk, som allevegne findes i Mængde. Illinois mangler tilstrækkelig Skov for sine store Prærier. Hvert Aar afbrænder Græsset paa Prærierne, og derved hindres unge Trærs Fremvæxt. Kun langs ved Elvene findes frugtbar Skov. Det meste Gavntømmer er Eeg, dog findes ogsaa paa sine Steder Ask, Alm, Valnødtræ, Lind, Asp, Sukkertræet o. f. d. Det vanskeligste er at finde Skov nok til Gjerdesfang. Paa mange Ste-[p. 16]der har man derfor begyndt at gjærde om sin Ager med Grøfte og Jordvolde, ligesom ogsaa at plante Blachlucas-Træet, der voxer meget hurtigt og formerer sig stærkt med Rodskud. Norske Indvandrende burde medtage noget Frø af den norske Birk og Furu. For den sidste gives paa sine Steder nok af sandagtig og mager Jord. — Indiana og Missouri ere bedre forsynte med Skov end Illinois.

Paa mange Steder i disse Stater gives Steenkul og Saltkilder. Paa Grændsen imellem Illinois og Visconsin Territorie gives en Mængde Blyminer, som tilhøre Regjeringen. Hvad her ellers findes af Mineralier, tilhører udeelt Jordeieren. Illinois er vel forsynet med godt Kildevand, hvilket Missouri tildeels maa savne.

Sommeren i Illinois er meget varmere end i Norge. Varmen i Norge kunde paa enkelte Dage være ligesaa stræng, som den nogensinde er i Illinois eller Missouri; men her er Veiret mere klart og blankt. Sjelden regner det her en heel Dag til Ende



om Sommeren, men naar her regner, er det heftigt og almindelig ledsaget af Torden og Lynild. Vinteren varer fra November til Enden af Marts, da Jorden her almindelig begynder at grønnes. Februar er den koldeste Maaned. Jeg har hørt mange Norske her paastaae, at de ikke have følt Kulden værre i Norge end den er i Amerika. Ikke destomindre er det almindeligt, at Kreaturerne [p. 17] gaae ude hele Vinteren, og Amerikanernes Huse ere ikke stort bedre end en Lade i Norge.

Prisen paa Regjeringsland har hidtil været  $1\frac{1}{4}$  Dollars for Ækkeren, hvad enten Jorden har været af bedste Sort eller af ringere Godhed. Prisen vil nu nedsættes og Jorden inddeles i tre Klasser efter dens forskellige Godhed, hvorefter ogsaa Prisen vil rette sig. Saaledes har jeg hørt, at der for Jord af tredje Klasse alene skal fordres  $\frac{1}{2}$  Daler Ækkeren.

En Ækker (Acre) Land er omtrent 104 Alen paa hver Kant. 40 Ækker, som er den mindste Lod, der kan kjøbes af Regjeringen, er 660 Alen paa hver Kant. En Lod paa 80 Ækker er 1320 Alen i Nord og Syd, og 660 Alen i Øst og Vest. Kjøber man to 80 Ækker-Lodder ved Siden af hinanden, da har man 160 Ækker i Qvadrat, og altsaa 1320 Alen paa hver Kant. Ved de mindste Lodder maa man følge de Mærker, som ere satte af Regjeringen; men det er tilladt at kjøbe f. Ex. to 80 Ækkerlodder efter hinanden N. og S. eller endog i nogen Frastand fra hinanden. En Amerikansk Miil er 2640 Alen lang. En Sektien (Section) er en Qvadrat, som er en amerikansk Miil paa hver Kant, og indeholder otte 80 Ækker-lodder. En Toun (Town) eller et Tounschip (Township) indeholder 36 Sektien, som ere ordnede saaledes, som omstaaende Figur viser:



*Copie.*

Kassererens Kontor i Daneville Illinois.

6te Januar 1838.

N<sup>o</sup> 7885.

Modtaget af Ingbrigt Nielson Bredvig of Iroqvis Co. Ill.  
 .....den Sum femti.....Dollars.....  
 som er fuld Betaling for N. V. h. V. Quarteer af Sektion N<sup>o</sup>  
 14.....i Township N<sup>o</sup> 27 Nord.....af Range N<sup>o</sup> 13  
 Vest.....indeholdende 40.....Ækker efter 1,25  
 Dollars.....pr. Ækker.  
 5000 Dollars.

SAND M. ROBERTS.

Kasserer.

Naar man vil kjøbe Land af en privat Mand, som selv før har kjøbt af Regjeringen, vil Prisen blive fra 2 til 30 Daler for Ækkeren. Mange Bedragere give sig af med at sælge Land, som de ikke eie, hvorved mange Fremmede ere blevne bedragne. Det sikreste og billigste er at kjøbe af Regjeringen og ganske kort afvise alle Spekulanter, der ligesom Rovdyr lure paa den Fremmede.

For hvert Aar tilbyder Regjeringen kun visse Strækninger Land til Salg. Hvad der ikke endnu [*p.* 20] er kommen til Salg, kan man dog begynde at dyrke og beboe; thi Rødningsmanden har den første Ret til at kjøbe Landet, naar det kommer til Salg. Et Stykke Land, som man paa denne Maade har tilegnet sig, kaldes her en Klæm (Clame). At kjøbe en Klæm vil altsaa sige at tilhandle sig Retten til at kjøbe Landet af Regjeringen. En Klæm er altsaa endnu ingen Eien- dom. Her gives mange Spekulanter, som berige sig ved at klæme Land og sælge deres Klæmer igjen.

Priserne paa Kreaturer og Levnetsmidler ere høist forskjel- lige. Her ved Beverkrig koster en taalelig god Hest 50 a 100 Daler; et Par gode Arbeidsoxer 50 a 80 Daler; en Fiir- hjulsvogn 60 a 80 Daler; en Malkeko med Kalv 16 a 20 Daler; en Sau 2 a 3 Daler; et Middels Sviin 6 a 10 Daler; Flesk 3 a 5

Skilling Marken; Smør 6 *a* 12 Skilling Marken; en Tønde fineste Hvedemeel 8 *a* 10 Daler; en Tønde Kornmeel (Meel af Maiz) 2½ *a* 3 Daler; en Tønde Potetes 1 Daler; et Pund Kaffe 20 Skilling; en Tønde Salt 5 Daler. I "Viscousin Territorie" ere Priserne paa enhver Ting 2 *a* 3 Gange høiere. 10 norske Mile S. for os og i Missouri ere Priserne paa de fleste Ting billigere [*sic*].

Daglønnen er ogsaa meget forskjellig paa de forskjellige Steder, og staaer temmelig nær i Forhold til Priserne paa andre Ting. Heromkring kan [*p. 21*] en duelig Arbeider om Vinteren fortjene fra ½ til 1 Daler om Dagen, og om Sommeren næsten det Dobbelte. Aarslønnen er fra 150 til 200 Daler. En Tjenestepige har 1 *a* 2 Daler om Ugen, og intet Udarbeide undtagen at malke Koerne. I Viscousin Territorie er Daglønnen 3 *a* 5 Daler; i Nyorleans og Texas er den ogsaa meget høi, men i Missouri er den igjen mindre. — Her ved Beverkrik kunne vi nu faae Folk til at brække Prærie for os for to Daler Ækkeren, naar vi alene holde dem med Kosten. Til at indgjærde 10 Ækker med det simpleste Slags Gjærde regner man 2000 Reels eller Skier. I middels Skov kan en duelig Arbeider splitte 100 *a* 150 Reels om Dagen. For Splitningen af 100 Reels tages ½ *a* 1 Daler. Til at indgjærde 40 Ækker behøves 4000 Reels, og til 160 Ækker 8000 Reels; alt beregnet efter det simpleste Slags Gjærde.

7. Hvad Slags Religion er der i Amerika? Er der nogen Slags Orden og Regjering i Landet, eller kan Enhver gjøre hvad han lyster?

Det var en almindelig Tro blandt Menigmand i Norge, at der i Amerika er et reent Hedenskab, eller endnu værre, at der ikke er nogen Religion. [*p. 22*] Dette forholder sig ikke saaledes. Her kan Enhver have sin egen Tro og dyrke Gud paa den Maade, som han anseer for den rette; men han tør ikke forfølge Nogen, fordi han har en anden Tro. Regjeringen her antager, at en tvungen Tro er ingen Tro, og at det bedst vil

visе sig, hvo der har Religion eller ikke, naar der er fuldkommen Religionsfrihed.

Den christelige Religion er den almindelige i Amerika; men formedelst Religionslærernes Selvklogskab og Paa-staaelighed i Smaating gives her mangfoldige Sekter, som dog i Hovedsagen ere enige. Saaledes hører man her tale om Katholiker, Protestanter, Lutheraner, Calvinister, Presbyterianer, Baptister, Qvækere, Methodister o. m. fl. Ogsaa blandt de Norske her gives forskjellige Sekter; men Præster eller Kirker have de ikke endnu. Enhver Mand, som mener det noget alvorligt, holder sin Andagt hjemme i sit Huus eller i Forening med sine Naboer.

Jeg har alt fortalt, at de forenede Stater ikke have nogen Konge. Ikke destomindre er her altid en Mand, som har omtrent en Konges Myndighed. Denne Mand vælges alene paa fire Aar, og kaldes Præsident. Den lovgivende Magt i Sager, som angaae alle de Forenede Stater under Eet, er hos Kongressen, som bestaaer af Mænd, der ere udvalgte af de forskjellige Stater. De forskjellige Sta-[p. 23]ter have hver sin egen Regjering ligesom Norge og Sverige, men den fælleds Kongres, det fælleds Sprog og et fælleds Pengevæsen forener dem nøiere. Antallet af de Forende Stater er nu 27.

Til Trøst for den Kleinmodige kan jeg altsaa med Sandhed forsikre, at her ere Love, Regjering og Øvrighed ligesaavel som i Norge. Men Alt er her beregnet paa at haandhæve Menneskets naturlige Frihed og Lighed. I den første Henseende staaer det Enhver frit for at drive hvilkensomhelst redelig Næringsvei, og at reise hvor han vil uden at spørges om Pas og uden at visiteres af Toldbetjente. Kun den virkelige Forbryder trues af Loven med Straf.

I Skrifter, som alene søge at finde Noget, som de kunne laste i Amerika, har jeg læst, at Amerikaneren er troløs, bedragerisk, haardhjertet o. s. v. Jeg vil aldrig nægte, at her findes saadanne Folk i Amerika, saavel som paa andre Steder, og at den Fremmede aldrig kan være forsigtig nok; men jeg



har befundet, at Amerikaneren i Almindelighed er bedre at omgaaes end den Norske, føieligere, tjenstagtigere og troværdigere i Eet og Alt. Det samme have de ældste Norske her forsikret mig. Da her er saa let at ernære sig paa en redelig Maade, ere Tyverier og Indbrud her næsten en uhørt Ting.

En styg Modsætning til hiin Frihed og Lighed, som medrette udgør Amerikanernes Stolthed, er den [*p. 24*] skjændige Slavehandel, som endnu taales og drives i de sydlige Stater. Her gives nemlig en Race af sorte Mennesker med uldagtigt Haar paa Hovedet, som kaldes Negere, og ere først førte hid fra Afrika, som er deres oprindelige Fædreland. I de sydlige Stater kjøbes og sælges disse stakkels Mennesker ligesom anden Eiendom, og drives til Arbeide med Pidsk eller Svøbe ligesom Heste eller Oxer. Om en Herre pidsker sin Slave til Døde eller i Raseri skyder ham ihjel, ansees han ikke derfor som en Morder. De Børn, som fødes af en Negerinde, ere fra Fødselen af Slaver, om endog en Hvid er deres Fader. — I Missouri er Slavehandelen endnu tilladt; men i Indiana, Illinois og Viscounsin Territory er den strengelig forbuden og afskyet. De nordlige Stater arbeide ved hver Kongres paa at faae Slavehandelen afskaffet i de sydlige Stater; men da disse altid modsætte sig, og beraabe sig paa deres Ret til selv at ordne deres indre Anliggender, vil der sandsynligviis snart blive enten Skilsmisse mellem de nordlige og sydlige Stater, eller ogsaa blodige indvortes Stridigheder.

Skatterne i Amerika ere meget lave. Jeg har kun hørt tale om to Slags Skatter her, nemlig: Landskat og Formuesskat. I de første fem Aar, efterat Jorden er kjøbt af Regjeringen, betales ingen Landskat. Formuesskatten udgjør  $\frac{1}{2}$  Daler af hvert Hundrede, man eier i Penge eller Løvsøre. [*p. 25*] Enhver Mandsperson over 21 Aar skylder Staten fire Dages Veiarbeide aarlig.

I Tilfælde af Ufred er enhver Mand pligtig at værne om sit Fædreland. I Fredstider er man her fri for at udskrives til Soldat.



### 8. Hvordan er der sørget for Børnelærdommen og for de Fattige?

Det er allerede omtalt, at den sextende Sektion i hvert Township er udlagt til Skoleland, og at Townshippets Indbyggere selv ere raadige over dets Anvendelse. Forresten er Skolevæsenet her frit, ligesom enhver anden Ting, men deraf følger ingenlunde Ligegyldighed for Børnenes Underviisning. Amerikaneren indseer meget godt, hvilket Fortrin den dannede Mand har fremfor den uvidende, og han sparer Intet paa sine Børns Underviisning og Dannelse. Ikke destomindre har jeg dog her truffet enkelte aldrende Mænd, som hverken kunde læse eller skrive. Blandt de Norske ved Foxriver er der nu oprettet to Skoler, hvor Børnene lære engelsk, men det norske Sprog synes der at ville uddøe med Forældrene. I detmindste lære Børnene ikke at læse Norsk. Ved Beverkrik er endnu ingen Skole opret-[p. 26]tet, men de fleste Børn, som ere gamle nok, ere komne i amerikanske Huse, hvor der almindelig sørges godt for deres Underviisning.

I denne Stat har jeg endnu ikke seet en Tigger. Den Arbejdsdygtige er her hævet over Fattigdom og Armod. For virkelig Trængende er her sørget ved et ypperligt Fattigvæsen. Om en Enke bliver siddende i trange Kaar, saa rives ikke Børnene fra Moderen og lægges paa Lægd som i Norge; men der gives Moderen rigelig Understøttelse til hendes egen og Børnenes Underholdning og de sidstes Skolegang.

### 9. Hvilket Sprog tales i Amerika? Er det vanskeligt at lære?

Da der fra alle Europas Lande strømme saa mange Mennesker til de Forenede Stater, maa man vente der at finde ligesaa mange forskellige Sprog. Imidlertid er det engelske Sprog overalt det herskende.

Ubekjendtskab med Sproget er vistnok en slem Ting for de norske Indvandrede. Især føler man dette paa Reisen ind igjennem Landet, dersom man ikke har Nogen i Følget, der forstaaer Engelsk. Men paa to a tre Maaneder vil man ved

daglig Omgang [*p. 27*] med Amerikanerne lære saa meget, at man hjælper sig godt. Nogle halvvoxne Børn, som kom over sidste Sommer, tale allerede meget godt Engelsk. Førend man har lært Sproget nogenlunde, maa man ikke vente at faae saa stor Dagløn eller Aarsløn, som de indfødte Amerikanere.

**10. Er det farligt med Hensyn til Sygdomme i Amerika? Har man noget at befrygte for vilde Dyr eller af Indianerne?**

Det er en Sandhed, som jeg ikke vil fordølge, at det uvante Klimat her almindelig foraarsager Nybyggerne en eller anden Sygelighed i det første Aar. Diarrhee eller Koldfeber hjemsøger da næsten Alle; men ved ordentlig Diæt ere disse Sygdomme sjælden farlige, og Naturen hjælper sig bedst selv uden Medicin. Kolden kommer sjælden igjen, naar man ikke har fordrevet den ved medicinsk Forkvaklen.

I denne Deel af Landet gives ingen farlige Rovdyr. Prærielulven ere ikke større end en Ræv, men dog forsaavidt skadelig, at den ofte ødelægger Sviin, Lam og Høns. Her er en Mængde Slinger, men smaae, og faa af dem ere giftige. Den giftigste Art er Klapperslangen; men selv denne [*p. 28*] er langt fra saa giftig, som man troer i Norge. Jeg veed to Exempler paa, at Mennesker ere bidte af Klapperslanger, og begge Gange bleve Patienterne kurerede med simple Huusmidler. Allevegne, hvor Klapperslangen findes, voxer ogsaa et Slags Græs, som almindelig ansees for den bedste Modgift mod dens Bid. En af de ældste Norske her har fortalt mig, at ham engang blev bidt af en Klapperslange, og at han fandt Paalæggelsen af tør Kampher at være det virksomste Middel til at fordrive Hævelsen.

Indianerne ere nu transporterede langt mod V. bort fra disse Grændser. Ingensteds i Illinois er man længer udsat for Overfald af dem. Desuden ere disse Folk meget godmodige og begynde aldrig Fiendtligheder, naar de ikke ere fornærmede. Qvækerne, som de kalde Fader Penns Børn, tilføje de aldrig noget Ondt.

11. For hvad Slags Folk er det raadelight at reise til Amerika, og for hvem er det ikke raadelight? — Advarsel imod urimelige Forventninger.

Efter Alt, hvad jeg hidtil har erfaret, vil den arbeidsomme norske Bonde eller Haandværksmand [*p.* 29] ligesom ogsaa den ordentlige Handelskarl snart erhverve sig saa Meget i Amerika, at han vil finde tilstrækkeligt Udkomme. Jeg har allerede omtalt Prisen paa Regjeringsland, og vil endnu blot tilføie, at jeg kjender flere Ungkarle, som ved almindeligt Arbeide her have lagt sig reent til Bedste 200 Daler paa et Aars Tid. Smede spørges her efter allevegne. En Smed, som forstaaer sit Haandværk, kan sikkert gjøre Regning paa, at hans Naboer, hvor han nedsætter sig, ville hjælpe ham med at bygge hans Huus og Smedie, ja endog laane ham Penge til at anskaffe Vælg og Værktøi. For at skoe en Hest rundt tages her to Daler og Mere, for en Jernkile 1 Daler, for en Høgaffel 1 Daler o. s. v. Gode Skræddere ville ogsaa have stadig og god Fortjeneste, og dernæst Skomageren; men disse maa lære om igjen; thi Skosaalerne blive her pindede istedetfor at syes fast. Dreiere, Snedkere og Vognmagere kunne ogsaa godt leve af deres Haandværker. En rask og ordentlig Handelskarl kan inden kort Tid blive en rig Mand; men han faaer ikke være bange for at slide noget Ondt og kampere ude Nat efter Nat.—Tjenestepiger kunne let faae Arbeide og have det meget godt. Fruentimmerne agtes og æres langt mere her, end det er almindeligt blandt Menigmand i Norge. Saavidt mig bekjendt, ere kun to eller tre norske Piger blevne gifte med Amerikanere, og jeg troer [*p.* 30] ikke, at de have gjort noget synderlig godt Parti. Men her ere mange norske Ungkarle, som helst vilde gifte sig med norske Piger, om de kunde.

De, som fatte Lyst til at udvandre til Amerika, bør ogsaa nøie overveie, om de have de nødvendige Midler til at koste sig did. Jeg vil ikke raade Nogen at reise, som ikke har idetmindste nogle Daler i Behold, naar han betræder ameri-

kansk Jordbund. Naar unge Folk have saa meget, at de kunne bekoste sig fra Nyjork til Rochester, da vil jeg troe, at de ere i Behold. Dertil vil gaae omtrent 4 a 5 Daler. De, som have store Familier, bør have saameget i Behold, at de kunne koste sig lige til Illinois, hvor Jorden er billig, og hvor der er Arbeide nok at faae for høi Dagløn. Fra Norge til Illinois maa man beregne, at der vil medgaae omtrent 60 Daler for hver Voxen, foruden Kostholdet over Søen. Dersom man gaaer paa norske Skibe, da maa man paa Søen betale ligesaa meget for Børn, som for Voxne. Altsaa kan man beregne, at der for Børn mellem 2 og 12 Aar vil medgaae i det Hele 45 D. og for Børn under 2 Aar 30 Daler. — De, som ikke have Formue til selv at bekoste sig frem, kunne tage Tjeneste hos en mere Formuende, og forpligte sig til at tjene ham f. Ex. 3 Aar for 50 Daler Aaret. Hermed ville begge Parter være vel tjente. Den, som saaledes vil betale Overreisen for Andre, maa see sig vel [*p. 31*] for, at han ikke blotter sig selv formeget, og at han ikke medtager slette eller uduelige Folk. En Tjener, som paa denne Maade er kommen over til Amerika, bør sammenligne sin Løn og sine Udsigter her med hvad han havde i Norge og derved bevæges til at opfylde den indgange Forpligtelse; thi intet andet Baand paaligger ham her, end det, som egen Retskaffenhed paalægger ham.

Folk, som jeg ikke vil raade at reise til Amerika, ere: 1) Drankere; de ville her afskyes og snart ynkelig omkomme, 2) De, som hverken kunne arbeide eller have Penge til at udføre Spekulationer. Hertil udfordres dog ikke mere for en enkelt Person, end 400 a 500 Daler. Af den studerende Klasse er her bedst Empløi for Doktorer og Apothekere; men selv saadanne vil jeg ikke raade at reise, medmindre de idetmindste forstaae at bruge Øxen, eller have lært et Haandværk, f. Ex. Skrædderhaandværket.

Mange reise till Amerika, med saa urimelige Forventninger og Forestillinger, at de nødvendigt maae finde sig skuffede. Den første Anstødsteen, Ubekjendtskab med Sproget, er

allerede nok til at nedslaae Modet hos Mange. Den, som ikke kan eller vil arbeide, maa aldrig vente, at Rigdomme og Vellevnet her staae aabne for ham. Nei, i Amerika faaer man Intet uden Arbeide; men sandt er det, at man [p. 32] ved Arbeide her kan vente engang at komme i bedre Kaar. Mange af de Nykomne have stødt sig over de usle Hytter, som ere Nybyggernes første Boliger; men de gode Folk skulde dog betænke, at de ved at flytte ind i et udyrket Land ikke kunne finde Huse færdige for dem. Førrend man har sat sin Jord i saadan Stand, at den kan føde sin Mand, er det neppe klogt at lægge sin Formue i kostbare Huusbygninger.

**12. Hvilke Farer kunne især møde paa Havet? Er det sandt, at de, som føres til Amerika, blive solgte som Slaver.**

Mange ansee Reisen over Havet saa forfærdelig farlig, at denne ene Forestilling er nok til at fængsle dem for stedse til deres Fædreland. Vist er det, at Landjorden er tryggere end Søen; men almindelig forestiller man sig Farerne større, end de virkelig ere. Saavidt mig bekjendt, er endnu intet Skib med norske Udvandrende til Amerika forulykket. Naar man har at godt Skib, en duelig Kapitain og flinke, ordentlige og paapasselige Søfolk, saa faaer man forresten slaae sin Lid til Herren. Han kan føre dig sikkert over det stormende Hav, [p. 33] og han kan finde dig i dit trygge Hjem, naar hans Time er kommen!

To Ting ere en slem Plage paa Søen, nemlig Søsøge og Kjedsomhed. Mod Søsøgen troer jeg ikke der gives noget probat Middel; men den er ingen dødelig Sygdom. Smaa Børn lide mindst af den. Fruentimmere, fornemmelig middelaldrrende Koner, udstaae ofte Meget af Søsøge. Det eneste lindrende Middel, jeg kjender, er, at være forsynet med forskjellig Slags Mad til Afvexling. Især har jeg mærket, et en god Viinsuppe ofte er styrkende og lindrende i



denne Sygdom. — Mod Kjedsomhed maa man væbne sig ved at medtage gode Bøger, og noget at arbeide paa. I denne Hensigt vil jeg ogsaa raade til at medtage Harpuner og andre Fiskeredskaber.

Et taabeligt Rygte troedes af Mange i Norge; nemlig at de, som vilde udvandre til Amerika, bleve førte til Tyrkiet, og solgte som Slaver. Dette Rygte er aldeles grundløst. Derimod er det sandt, at mange, som ikke selv kunde bekoste sig over Søen, alene paa den Maade ere komne over, at de have solgt sig selv eller deres Tjeneste paa visse Aar til en Mand her i Landet. Mange skulle derved være komne i slette Hænder, og have ikke havt det bedre end Slaver. Ingen Norsk er, saavidt mig bekjendt \*), [p. 34] kommen i saadanne Omstændigheder, heller ikke er det at befrygte, naar man gaaer med norske Skibe og sine egne Landsmænd.

### 13. Veiledende Raad for dem, som ville reise til Amerika.

Naar kun enkelte Personer ville udvandre til Amerika, kunne de ikke vente at træffe Skibsleilighed did direkte fra Norge, saasom dette Land ikke har nogen Kommerce med de Forenede Stater. De maae derfor gaae enten til Gøttheborg\*) i Sverige, eller Bremen i Tydskland, eller Havre i Frankrige. Fra alle disse Steder gaaer hyppig Skibsleilighed til de Forenede Stater, og Fragten er almindelig billigere end ifra Norge. Men naar Flere paa een Gang ville udvandre, vil jeg helst raade dem at gaae paa norske Skibe og med norske Sjøfolk, da de derved ville føle sig selv sikrere. I [p. 35] denne Henseende er det ogsaa bedst at gaae med en Kapitain, som har været i Amerika tilforn, f. Ex. Kapitain Behrens i

\*) [p. 33] Alle Norske, som have været i længere Tid i Amerika, og som have været ordentlige og arbeidsomme, have [p. 34] kommet sig godt. Mange ere komne over saaledes, at andre Norske have betalt for dem, men derfor have de ligemeget været deres egne Herrer. Efter en kort Tid have de almindelig oparbejdet deres Gjæld.

\*) [p. 34] Nogle Ungkarle fra Nummedal gik sidste Sommer fra Gøttheborg til Newport paa Rhode Island. De vare kun 32 Dage over Søen, og rose meget deres Kapitain Rønneberg.



Bergen, hvem jeg kan anbefale som en duelig Mand, eller en af de Kapitainer, som have ført Passagererne fra Stavanger til Nyjork.

Naar altsaa Flere paa een Gang ville udvandre, maae de henvende sig til en Mægler i nærmeste Sjøstad, der vil hjælpe dem til at akkordere den billigste Fragt. De maae nøie udforske, om Skibet er en god Seiler og i god Stand.—Til Efterretning angaaende Akkorden bemærkes, at Fragten paa norske Skibe hidtil har været 30 Spd.—for Børn, saavelsom for Voxne. Fra andre Landes Havne pleier Fragten for Voxne at være mindre, stundom kun 20 Daler; og for Børn under 12 Aar enten det Halve eller Intet.

Certepartiet, eller den skrevne Kontrakt, bør være saa nøiagtigt og omstændeligt, som muligt. Det bør være skrevet baade paa Engelsk og Norsk. Nogle enkelte Bestemmelser, som ikke bør udelades, vil jeg her nævne, nemlig: a) Kapitainen (eller Rederiet) sørger for Veed og Vand for 12 Uger. Vandet leveres paa gode Fade, hvor det ikke bedærvs, og tilmaales hver Passageer 3 Potter daglig. Dersom Vandet paa enkelte Fade bedærvs, skal det gode Vand forbruges, førend man begynder med det slette, og skal Kapitainen for sit eget [*p. 36*] Brug tage Vand af samme Fad som Passagererne. b) Forresten holde Passagererne sig selv med Proviant, men Kapitainen skal paasee, at enhver medtager tilstrækkelig Proviant for 12 Uger. Passagererne holde sig ogsaa selv med Lys. c) For den akkorderede Sum bringer Kapitainen Passagererne i Land paa det bestemte Sted, uden nogen ny Udgift\*) for dem, enten under Navn af Landingspenge. Qvarantainepenge, Korporationspenge, Drikkepenge eller andet deslige. b) Fragten betales forud mod Qvittering, som er skreven baade paa Engelsk og paa Norsk. Dersom Kapitainen paa egen Resiko

\*) [*p. 36*] Denne Bestemmelse er ganske nødvendig; thi ellers kunde en slet Kapitain under eet eller andet Paaskud fordre et nyt Udlæg af Passagererne, og ved sin Myndighed og deres Uvidenhed og Ubekjendtskab med Sproget, tvinge dem til at betale.

medtager Nogen, som ikke har betalt den akkorderede Sum fuldtud, da har han ikke mere Ret at kræve ham, saasnart han har modtaget ham og hans Tøi ombord — (Ved denne sidste Bestemmelse sikres man for, at Kapitainen medtager Nogen, som formedelst sin Fattigdom enten vil ligge de Øvrige til Byrde, eller overlades til Kapitainens Vilkaarlighed).

Jeg vil raade Enhver, som gaaer til Amerika, at omvexle sine Penge i Sølv og Guld, og ikke tage Vexel. — Spanske Pjastere ere lige gjældende [*p.* 37] med amerikanske Dollars, men franske Femfranks ere 6 Cents mindre. En amerikansk Dollar indeholder 100 Cents og hver Cents er saa meget som en Skilling norsk. En Shilling indeholder 12 Pence, eller  $12\frac{1}{2}$  Cents. Her gives Sølvpenge, som gjælde for  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{8}$ ,  $\frac{1}{10}$ ,  $\frac{1}{16}$ ,  $\frac{1}{20}$  Dollar. I Illinois er den mindste gangbare Hynt =  $6\frac{1}{4}$  Cents. Al Slags Sølv = eller Guldpenge gaae i Amerika; norske Sølvpenge, som er mindre end  $\frac{1}{2}$  Daler, afsættes endog med betydelig Fordeel.

Den bedste Tid at forlade Norge er, saa tidlig om Vaaren, at man kan naae did, hvor man vil nedsætte sig, inden Midsommer, eller kort efter den Tid. Derved kan man endda faae saae Noget samme Aar; nemlig Boghvede, som saaes i de sidste Dage af Juni, Næper (Turnips), som saaes i Slutningen af Juli, og Potetes. Det er meget slemt at komme saa seent paa Aaret, at man ikke kan samle Foder for en a to Køer og bygge sig et Huus for Vinteren.

Den bedste Vei troer jeg er at gaae over Nyjork, ligesom de fleste andre Indvandrende. Det er vel billigere og snarere at gaae over Nyorleans; men der er for varmt og usundt om Sommeren, og paa nogen anden Tid af Aaret er det ikke raadeligt at indvandre til et udyrket Land uden Huse. Ogsaa maa jeg bemærke, at Nyorleans er bekjendt for at indeholde de sletteste Folk i de Forenede Stater.<sup>39</sup>

[*p.* 38] De, som ville udvandre til Amerika, bør medtage, a) Sengeklæder, Skind = og Vadmelsklæder, samt stampet Vad-

<sup>39</sup> This paragraph does not appear in the 1839 version of Rynning's chapter 13 as printed in Anderson, *Student Ole Rynnings Amerikabog*. In

mel, b) en Baxtehelle, en Rok, om muligt en Haandqværn, Sølvtpøi og nogle Tobakspiber til Salg. c) En Haandværker bør medtage sit Værktøi. d) Nogle gode Rifler med Perkussionslaas, deels for eget Brug, deels til Salg. Jeg har alt fortalt, at en god Rifle her koster 15 a 20 Daler.

Til Proviant over Søen bør medtages Noget af hvert Slags Madvarer, der holder sig længe uden at bedærvs. Flesk, Spegekjød, saltet Kjød, Spegesild, røget Sild, Tørfisk, Smør, Ost, Primost (Møsmør), Melk, Øl, Meel, Ærter, Gryn, Potetes, Rugskonrokker, Kaffe, The, Sukker, Gryde, Pande og Kjedel bør man have med. Hvad man ikke forbruger over Søen, gjør man rettest i at tage med sig op

its place, however, appear several paragraphs not in the original edition of 1838. These paragraphs, drawn from the Anderson reprint (52-54), are as follows:

Hidtil have de norske Indvandrende altid søgt Skibseilighed til Nyjork. Derfra til Chicago i Illinois er den mindst bekostelige Vei at gaae paa Dampbaad opad Hudsonsriver til Albany; fra Albany til Buffalo paa Kanalbaad, som træk kes af Heste; fra Buffalo paa Dampbaad over Erie, St. Clair, Huron og Michigan Søerne til Chicago. Herfra gaaer Veien over Land enten mod Syd til Biverkrik, eller mod Vest til Foxriver. Fra Nyjork til Buffalo kan man akkordere sig Fragten for 3 a 4 Daler med sit Tøi; og fra Buffalo til Chicago for 9 a 12 Daler. Fra Chicago til Biverkrik forlange Kjørere fra Wabash almindelig 1 Daler for hvert hundrede Pund. Enhver Kontrakt med Dampbaadkompagnier eller Kjørere bør ske skriftlig og med den muligste Nøiagtighed, om man ikke vil bedrages. For Sikkerheds Skyld bør man beregne, at omtrent 30 Daler ville medgaae for hver Voxen fra Nyjork til Biverkrik eller Foxriver. For Børn mellem 2 og 12 Aar betales her altid det Halve og for Børn under 2 Aar, eller som endnu bæres paa Armen, Intet. Den nævnte Vei fra Nyjork til Biverkrik vil jeg anslaae omtrent til halvtrediehundrede norske Mile.

En af dem, som ankom her sidste Høst, fulgte ikke Dampbaaden fra Buffalo længer end til Toledo ved Erie Sø. Her kjøbte han Hest og Vogn, og transporterede selv sit Tøi til Biverkrik. Paa denne Maade kom han temmelig billigt frem med sin store Familie, men var ogsaa en god Deel længer underveis, end de, som fulgte Dampbaaden.

For dem, som ville gaae til Missouri\*), er det udentviil baade den snarest og billigste Vei at gaae over Nyorleans. Men herved maa mærkes: 1) at man sjelden vil gaae til Nyorleans uden med Skibe, som ere forhuede med Kobber og 2) at det i Nyorleans er meget usundt og sygeligt, undtagen netop fra December Maanedes Begyndelse indtil April. Men just paa denne Tid af Aaret er det værst at undvære Huse, hvilket er Nybyggeres almindelige Skjæbne.

\*) Efter Forsikring af Kleng Peerson, som kjender Landet bedst, og som har været de Norskes Veileder fra først af, er Missouri den Stat, hvor de Indvandrende nu helst bør søge hen. De maa da først gaae til St. Louis ved Mississippi, derfra til Merion City, derfra til "The Norwegian settlement on Northriver, Shelby County."

igjennem Landet, thi af Proviant betales ingen Fragt paa Damp=og Kanalbaade.

Som Medicin bør man medtage a) lidt Brændeviin, Ædikke og et Par Flasker Viin, samt Rosiner og Svedsker til at lave Suppe af for Søsye, b) Et afførende Middel mod den Forstoppelse, som ofte indfinder sig paa Søen. Uden høi Nød bør dog denne Medicin ikke bruges. c) Svovelpulver og Svovelsalve mod Fnæt. Hvorledes denne Medicin bruges, faaer man høre paa Apotheket eller [p. 39] hos en Doktor, d) Hofmannsdræber og Kampherdræber.

For Reenlighed er det nødvendigt at medtage: a) Linned til Ombytning, b) Søvandssæbe til Vask og c) gode Fiinkamme.

Endnu engang maa jeg raade Enhver at medtage Noget til Beskjæftigelse over Søen, saasom Fiskeredskaber, Traad til at binde Fiskegarn af. o. a. d.

Det er en god Ting, naar de Indvandrende kunne have en paalidelig Veileder og Tolk fra Nyjork op igjennem Landet. For dem, som ville reise næste Vaar \*), er dertil god Anledning med Ansteen Knudsen Nattestad fra Rolloug Præstegjæld i Nummedal, som nu er en Tour tilbage til Norge.

\*) [p. 39] Nemlig om Vaaren 1839.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

OLE RYNNING

TRUE ACCOUNT OF AMERICA  
FOR THE INFORMATION AND HELP OF  
PEASANT AND COMMONER





TRUE ACCOUNT

OF

AMERICA

for the Information and Help of Peasant and  
Commoner

Written by

a Norwegian who arrived there in  
the month of June, 1837

CHRISTIANIA

1838

Printed in the office of Guldberg and Dzwonkowski by P. T. Malling.

## PREFACE

DEAR COUNTRYMEN — PEASANTS AND ARTISANS:

I have now been in *America* eight months, and in this time have had an opportunity to learn much in regard to which I vainly sought to procure information before I left Norway. I felt on that occasion how unpleasant it is for those who wish to emigrate to *America* to be without a trustworthy and fairly detailed account of the country. I learned also how great the ignorance of the people is, and what false and preposterous reports were believed as full truth. It has therefore been my endeavor in this little publication to answer every question that I myself raised, to make clear every point in regard to which I observed that people were in ignorance, and to refute the false reports which have come to my ears, partly before my departure from Norway and partly after my arrival here. I trust, dear reader, that you will not find any point concerning which you desired information overlooked or imperfectly treated.

ILLINOIS, February 13, 1838

OLE RYNNING



## CONTENTS

1. In what general direction from Norway does America lie, and how far is it away?
2. How did the country first become known?
3. What in general is the nature of the country, and for what reason do so many people go there, and expect to make a living?
4. Is it not to be feared that the land will soon be overpopulated? Is it true that the government is going to prohibit more people from coming?
5. In what part of the country have the Norwegians settled? What is the most convenient and cheapest way to reach them?
6. What is the nature of the land where the Norwegians have settled? What does good land cost? What are the prices of cattle and of provisions? How high are wages?
7. What kind of religion is to be found in America? Is there any kind of order or government in the land, or can every one do as he pleases?
8. What provisions are made for the education of children, and for the care of poor people?
9. What language is spoken in America? Is it difficult to learn?
10. Is there considerable danger from disease in America? Is there reason to fear wild animals and the Indians?
11. For what kind of people is it advisable to emigrate to America, and for whom is it not advisable? — Caution against unreasonable expectations.

12. What particular dangers is one likely to encounter on the ocean? Is it true that those who are taken to America are sold as slaves?
13. Guiding advice for those who wish to go to America. How they should hire a ship; how they should exchange their money; what time of the year and what route are the most convenient; what they ought to take with them.



ACCOUNT  
OF  
AMERICA



**1. In what general direction from Norway does America lie, and how far is it away?**

*America* is a very large continent which is situated to the west of Norway. It stretches about thirteen hundred [*Norwegian*] miles from north to south, and consists of two chief divisions which are connected only by a narrow isthmus. That part which lies north of this isthmus is called *North America*, and that which is situated south of it is called *South America*. Each of these sections includes many countries which are just as different in name, government, and situation as Norway and England, or Norway and Spain. Therefore, when emigration to America is being considered, you must ask, "To what part of America, and to what province?" The most important country in all America with respect to population as well as to freedom and happy form of government is the "*United States*" in North America. Usually, therefore, this country is meant when you hear some one speak of America in an indefinite way. It is to this land your countrymen have emigrated; and it is this land which I shall now describe.

The *United States* is situated about southwest from Norway. To go there you must sail over an ocean which is approximately nine hundred Norwegian miles wide. With a favorable wind and on a ship that sails well you can cross in less than a month; but the usual time is nine weeks, sometimes a little more, sometimes less. As a matter of fact the wind is generally from the west, and therefore against you, when you are sailing to America. Depending upon the nature of the weather, you go sometimes north of Scotland, which is the shortest way, and sometimes through the channel between England and France.

Since America lies so far to the west, noon occurs there a little over six hours later than in Norway. The sun — as commonly expressed — passes around the earth in twenty-four hours, a phenomenon experienced every day; hence six hours

is one fourth of the time required in passing around. It may therefore be concluded that from Norway to America is one fourth of the entire distance around the earth.

## 2. How did the country first become known?

It is clearly shown by the old sagas that the Norwegians knew of America before the black death. They called the land *Vinland the Good*, and found that it had low coasts, which were everywhere overgrown with woods. Nevertheless there were human beings there even at that time; but they were savage, and the Northmen had so little respect for them as to call them "*Skrellings*." <sup>40</sup> After the black death in 1350 the Norwegians forgot the way to *Vinland the Good*, and the credit for the discovery of America is now given to *Christopher Columbus*, who found the way there in 1492. He was at that time in the service of the Spanish; and the Spaniards, therefore, reaped the first benefits of this important discovery.

During the reign of Queen Elizabeth over England Englishmen for the first time sailed along the western [*sic*] coast of North America, and Walter Raleigh established the first English colony, which he called Virginia. Gradually several colonies were established by various nations. Some Norwegians also founded a little town in 1624, which they named *Bergen*, in that part of the country which is now called New Jersey. <sup>41</sup> The English maintained predominance, however, and

<sup>40</sup> "A disparaging epithet, meaning inferior people, *i.e.*, savages." Julius E. Olson in *The Northmen, Columbus, and Cabot, 985-1503*, p. 36, n. 3 (*Original Narratives of Early American History* — New York, 1906).

<sup>41</sup> There is no basis of fact for this statement. Probably the origin of the belief that Bergen was a Norwegian colony is the name itself. It has been asserted that Hans Hansen, from Bergen, Norway, who settled in New Amsterdam in 1633, led a group of Dutch and Norwegians across the Hudson River, and founded Bergen, later Jersey City, New Jersey, and furthermore that Bergen, city as well as county, was named after Hans Hansen Bergen. Hjalmar R. Holand, *De norske Settlementers Historie*, 25 (Ephraim, Wisconsin, 1909). Dr. John O. Evjen has proved, however, that Bergen, New Jersey, was named after Bergen op Zoom, and was founded after the death of Hans Hansen, who had no property

the country was under their jurisdiction until the fourth of July, 1776, when it separated from England and formed a free government without a king. Since that time it is almost unbelievable how rapidly the country has progressed in wealth and population.

In 1821 a man by the name of *Kleng Peersen* from the county of Stavanger in Norway emigrated to New York in the *United States*. He made a flying visit back to Norway in 1824 and, through his accounts of America, awakened in many the desire to go there.<sup>42</sup> An emigration party consisting of fifty-

on the west side of the Hudson, where Bergen was located. *Scandinavian Immigrants in New York, 1630-1674*, p. 14, n. 57, 280 (Minneapolis, 1916); and "Nordmænd i Amerika i det 17de Aarhundrede" in *Folkebladet* (Minneapolis), February 2, 1910. Langeland, apparently using Rynning as his source, repeats the story of Bergen as a Norwegian colony founded in 1624. *Nordmændene i Amerika*, 9.

<sup>42</sup> Practically all writers who have dealt with the history of Norwegian immigration have discussed the migration of 1825 and its antecedents. Among the more recent contributions to the subject may be mentioned Henry J. Cadbury, "The Norwegian Quakers of 1825," in Norwegian-American Historical Association, *Studies and Records*, 1: 60-94; Cadbury, "De förste Kväkere i Stavanger," in *Decorah-Posten*, May 21 and 28, and June 4 and 11, 1926; Gunnar J. Malmin, "Norsk Landnam i U. S.," in *Decorah-Posten*, November 21 and 28, and December 5 and 12, 1924; Malmin, "Paa Jagt i de norske Arkiver," in *Familiens Magasin* (Minneapolis), September-October, 1925; O. M. Norlie, *History of the Norwegian People in America*, 112-135 (Minneapolis, 1925); and the writer's "Cleng Peerson and Norwegian Immigration," in the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 7: 303-331 (March, 1921). Among the older materials on the "sloop folk" are the narrative of Ansten Nattestad as given by Nilsson in *Billed-Magazin*, 1: 102-104; Anderson, *First Chapter of Norwegian Immigration*, 54-131; Babcock, *Scandinavian Element*, 22-29; Flom, *Norwegian Immigration*, 45-54; Langeland, *Nordmændene i Amerika*, 10-13; Olaf N. Nelson, "The First Norwegian Immigration, or The Sloop Party of 1825," in *History of the Scandinavians in the United States*, part 1, p. 125-134P (Nelson ed., 2d edition, 1904); and Johannes B. Wist, *Den norske Indvandring til 1850 og Skandinaverne i Amerikas Politik*, 14-17. The annotations in Cadbury's "The Norwegian Quakers of 1825" are a convenient guide to the literature of the entire subject. It is a curious fact that modern scholarship in Norway has made few significant contributions to the history of the movement of emigration inaugurated in 1825. Mention should be made, however, of an interesting, though highly impressionistic, recent book on the subject by a Norwegian writer: Christian Gierlöff, *Folket som utvandrer* (Oslo, Norway, 1925).

two persons bought a little sloop for eighteen hundred *speciedaler*<sup>43</sup> and loaded it with iron to go to New York. The skipper and mate themselves took part in this speculation. They passed through the channel and came into a little outport on the coast of England, where they began to sell whiskey, which is a forbidden article of sale at that place. When they found out what danger they had thereby incurred, they had to make to sea again in greatest haste. Either on account of the ignorance of the skipper or because of head winds, they sailed as far south as the Madeira Islands.<sup>44</sup> There they found a cask of madeira wine floating on the sea, which they hauled into the boat and from which they began to pump and drink. When the whole crew had become tipsy, the ship came drifting into the harbor like a plague ship, without command, and without raising its flag. A man on a vessel from Bremen, which was lying in port, shouted to them that they must immediately hoist their flag if they did not wish to be fired upon by the cannons of the fortress, which, indeed, were already being aimed at them. Finally one of the passengers found the flag and had it raised. After this and other dangers they at length reached New York in the summer of 1825. In all, the voyage from Stavanger to America had taken fourteen weeks, which is the longest time I know any Norwegian to have been on the way.<sup>45</sup> Nobody, however, had died on the sea, and all were well when they landed. It created universal surprise in

<sup>43</sup> According to Flom's valuation of the *speciedaler* the purchase price amounted to about \$1,370. *Norwegian Immigration*, 224.

<sup>44</sup> In the *New York Daily Advertiser*, October 15, 1825, the captain and passengers of the sloop publicly acknowledge their thanks to John H. March, the American consul at Madeira, for his hospitality to the company when they touched at that island, and also to the inhabitants of the island for their kindness. Anderson, *First Chapter of Norwegian Immigration*, 72.

<sup>45</sup> The sloop sailed from Stavanger on July 4 or 5 with fifty-two passengers. When New York was reached, October 9, the party numbered fifty-three, a child having been born during the voyage. Anderson, *First Chapter of Norwegian Immigration*, 57-59; Cadbury, in *Norwegian-American Historical Association, Studies and Records*, 1: 63-65.



New York that the Norwegians had ventured over the wide sea in so small a vessel, a feat hitherto unheard of.<sup>46</sup> Either through ignorance or misunderstanding the ship had carried more passengers than the American laws permitted, and therefore the skipper and the ship with its cargo were seized by the authorities.<sup>47</sup> Now I can not say with certainty whether the government voluntarily dropped the matter in consideration of the ignorance and childlike conduct of our good countrymen, or whether the Quakers had already at this time interposed for them; at all events the skipper was released, and the ship and its cargo were returned to their owners. They lost considerably by the sale of the same, however, which did not bring them more than four hundred dollars. The skipper and the mate settled in New York. Through contributions from the Quakers the others were enabled to go farther up into the country. Two Quakers in the company established themselves in *Rochester*. One of these, Lars Larsen by name, lives there still. The others bought land in *Murray*,<sup>48</sup> five miles northwest of Rochester. They had to give five dollars an acre, but, since they did not have money with which to liquidate the entire amount at once, they made arrangements to pay by installments within ten years. Each one bought about forty acres. The land was thickly overgrown with woods and difficult to clear. Consequently, during the first four or five years conditions were very hard for these people. They often suffered great need,

<sup>46</sup> See extracts from contemporary New York newspapers in Anderson, *First Chapter of Norwegian Immigration*, 69-76.

<sup>47</sup> See the report of Henry Gahn, the Swedish-Norwegian consul at New York, October 15, 1825, transcribed from the government archives at Oslo, and quoted in part in *Familiens Magasin*, September-October, 1925. The full transcript is in the manuscript division of the Minnesota Historical Society. A law of March 2, 1819, allowed only two passengers to each five tons. United States, *Statutes at Large*, 3:488. Cf. Cadbury, in Norwegian-American Historical Association, *Studies and Records*, 1:65.

<sup>48</sup> The original name of the northeast township of Orleans County. Anderson, *First Chapter of Norwegian Immigration*, 78. Rynning's text reads "Morri."

and wished themselves back in Norway; but they saw no possibility of getting there without giving up the last mite of their property, and they would not return as beggars. Well-to-do neighbors assisted them, however, and by their own industry they at last got their land in such condition that they could earn a living from it, and live better than in their old native land. As a result of their letters, more Norwegian peasants were now encouraged to try their fortunes in America; but they went only singly, and commonly took the route by way of Gothenburg, Sweden, where there is often a chance to get passage for America. One of those who went by this route, a man by the name of Gjert Gregoriussen Hovland, wrote several letters to his friends in Norway, which were copied many times and sent about to many districts in the diocese of Bergen.<sup>49</sup> In 1835 one of the first emigrants, a young bachelor named Knud Slagvigen, likewise made a trip back to Norway, and many persons traveled a long way just to talk with him.<sup>50</sup> Thus, America began to be more and more known to peasant and commoner in the dioceses of Bergen and Christiansand. As a result two ships sailed in 1836 with emigrants from Stavanger, and in 1837 one from Bergen and one from Stavanger, in addition to many emigrants who went by way of Gothenburg or Hamburg. By far the greater number of those with whom I have talked so far find themselves well satisfied with their new native land.

3. What in general is the nature of the country, and for what reason do so many people go there, and expect to make a living?

The *United States* is a very large country, more than twenty times as large as all Norway. The greater part of the land is flat and arable; but, as its extent is so great, there is also a great difference with respect to the mildness of the weather

<sup>49</sup> See *ante*, n. 5.

<sup>50</sup> The name is usually given as Knud Anderson Slogvig.

and the fertility of the soil. In the most eastern and northern states the climate and soil are not better than in the southern part of Norway. In the western states, on the contrary, the soil is generally so rich that it produces every kind of grain without the use of manure; and in the southern states even sugar, rice, tobacco, cotton, and many products which require much heat, are grown.

It is a general belief among the common people in Norway that America was well populated some years ago, and that a plague — almost like the black death — has left the country desolate of people. As a result they are of the opinion that those who emigrate to America will find cultivated farms, houses, clothes, and furniture ready for them, everything in the condition in which it was left by the former owners. This is a false supposition.\* When the country was first discovered, this part of America was inhabited only by certain savage nations that lived by hunting. The old inhabitants were pressed back more and more, inasmuch as they would not accustom themselves to a regular life and to industry; but as yet the greater part of the land has not begun to be cultivated and settled by civilized peoples.

**4. Is it not to be feared that the land will soon be overpopulated? Is it true that the government is going to prohibit more people from coming?**

It has been stated above that the United States in extent is more than twenty times as large as Norway, and that the greater part of the country is not yet under cultivation. If,

\*I will not deny, however, that far back in time the United States may have been populated by another and more civilized race than the savage Indians who now are commonly regarded as the first inhabitants of the country. I have, in fact, seen old burial mounds here, which resemble the Norwegian barrows; and Americans have told me that by digging in such mounds there have been found both human bones of exceptional size, and various weapons and implements of iron, which give evidence of a higher civilization than that of the Indians. It is also significant that the Indians themselves do not know the origin of these mounds.

in addition to this, we consider that almost every foot of land in the United States is arable, while the greater part of Norway consists of barren mountains, and that America on account of its southern situation is richer than Norway in products for human subsistence, then we can without exaggeration conclude that the United States could support more than one hundred times as many people as are to be found in all Norway. Now it is no doubt a fact that hundreds of thousands of people flock there yearly from various other lands of Europe, but nevertheless there is no danger that the land will be filled up in the first fifty years. When we were in New York last summer, several thousand immigrants from England, Germany, France, and other countries arrived daily. Many thoughtful men in our company became disheartened thereby, and believed that the whole country was going to become filled at once, but they soon discovered that this fear was unwarranted. Many did, indeed, make their way into the interior with us; but they became more and more scattered, and before we reached Illinois there was not a single one of them in our company.

Before my departure from Norway I heard the rumor that the government in the United States was not going to permit further immigration.<sup>51</sup> This report is false. The American government desires just this, that industrious, active, and moral people immigrate to its land, and therefore has issued no prohibition in this respect. It is true, however, that the government is anxious to prevent immigrants, upon their arrival in this country, from becoming, through begging, a burden to the inhabitants of the seaport towns.\* As a matter of fact,

\* The report seems to have been circulated in Norway that those who emigrated from Stavanger in 1836 have been forced to go about in America and beg in order to raise money enough to get back to Norway. But so far as I have inquired and heard, this is purely a falsehood. I have talked with most of those who came over in 1836, and all seem to have been more or less successful.

---

<sup>51</sup> This report may have had its source in efforts made in Norway to

a large number of those who emigrate to America are poor people who, when they land, have hardly so much left as to be able to buy a meal for themselves and their families. However good the prospects for the poor laborer really are in America, yet it would be too much to expect that, on the very first day he steps upon American soil, he should get work, especially in the seaport towns, where so many thousands who are looking for employment arrive daily. His only recourse, therefore, is to beg. To prevent this, the government requires the payment of a tax from every person who lands in America with the purpose of settlement. With this tax are defrayed the expenses of several poorhouses which have been established for poor immigrants. Those who at once continue their journey farther into the country are required to pay less than those who remain in the seaports, for the former can more easily find work and support themselves.

When we landed in New York, the tax there was two and one-half dollars; but there is a rumor that it is going to be raised. At some places the tax is ten dollars.<sup>52</sup>

The immigrants of different nations are not equally well received by the Americans. From Ireland there comes yearly a great rabble, who, because of their tendency to drunkenness, their fighting, and their knavery, make themselves commonly hated. A respectable Irishman hardly dares acknowledge his nationality. The Norwegians in general have thus far a good reputation for their industry, trustworthiness, and the readiness with which the more well-to-do have helped the poorer on the journey through the country.

discourage emigration, or it may have originated in connection with the rising current of nativism in the United States in the thirties.

<sup>52</sup> The *New York Times* of June 9, 1837, carried the following notice about the head tax: "His Honor the Mayor, Mr. Clark, has expressed his determination to consider all persons coming into this port from abroad, as paupers and charge the full amount of tax on them allowed by the law, previous to their landing, viz. \$10 per head."



5. In what part of the country have the Norwegians settled?  
 What is the most convenient and cheapest  
 way to reach them?

Norwegians are to be found scattered about in many places in the United States. One may meet a few Norwegians in New York, Rochester, Detroit, Chicago, Philadelphia, and New Orleans, yet I know of only four or five places where several Norwegians have settled together, and these places are as follows. The first company of Norwegian immigrants, as I have already said, settled in (1) Murray Town, Orleans County, New York State, in 1825. Only two or three families remain there now; the others have moved farther into the country, where they have settled in (2) La Salle County, Illinois State, by the Fox River, about one and one-half Norwegian miles northeast from the city of Ottawa, and eleven or twelve miles west of Chicago. From sixteen to twenty families of Norwegians live there. This colony was established in 1834. (3) White County, Indiana State, about ten Norwegian miles south of Lake Michigan, on the Tippecanoe River. There are living in this place as yet only two Norwegians from Drammen, who together own nearly eleven hundred acres of land; but in the vicinity good land still remains unoccupied. A number of Norwegians from Stavanger settled in (4) Shelby County, Missouri State, in the spring of 1837.<sup>53</sup> I do not know how many families live there. A large number of those who came over last summer settled in (5) Iroquois County, Illinois State, on the Beaver and Iroquois rivers. At this place there are now eleven or twelve families.

Usually the Norwegians prefer to seek a place where they can expect to find fellow-countrymen; but it is always difficult to get good unoccupied land in the vicinity of those who immigrated one or two years earlier.

<sup>53</sup> On this colony see "Peter Testman's Account of his Experiences in North America," in *Minnesota History*, 6:91-114 (June, 1925). The circumstances of the establishment of the colony are told in Sjur Jørgensen Haaeim, *Oplysninger om Forholdene i Nordamerika*, 2 (Christiania, 1842).



6. What is the nature of the land where the Norwegians have settled? What does good land cost? What are the prices of cattle and of provisions? How high are wages?

In the western regions, where all the Norwegian immigrants now go, the land is very flat and low. I had imagined that thick woods would cover that part of the land which had not yet begun to be cleared; but I found it quite different. One can go two or three miles over natural meadows, which are overgrown with the most luxuriant grass, without finding a single tree. These natural meadows are called prairies. From earliest spring until latest fall they are covered with the most diverse flowers. Every month they put on a new garb. Most of these plants and species of grass are unknown in Norway, or are found only here and there in the gardens of distinguished people.

The prairies are a great boon to the settlers. It costs them nothing to pasture their cattle and to gather fodder for the winter. In less than two days a capable laborer can cut and rake enough fodder for one cow. Still the prairie grass is not considered so good as tame hay of timothy and clover. The soil on the prairies is usually rich, and free from stones and roots. In order to break a field, therefore, only a strong plow and four or five yoke of oxen are needed; with these a man can plough up one or two acres of prairie a day. Without being manured, the soil produces corn, wheat, buckwheat, oats, potatoes, turnips, carrots, melons, and other things that make up the produce of the land. Corn is considered the most profitable crop, and yields from twelve to twenty-four barrels an acre. Oats and a large part of the corn are fed only to horses and cattle. As food for people wheat flour is most used. Barley and rye grow well in some places, and thrive; but I have not yet seen any of these grains. Barley, like oats, is used only for fodder. Beer is not to be found, and most of the milk is given to calves and hogs. For breakfast and supper coffee or tea is always served, but at other times only cold water is drunk.

According to the price of beer in Chicago, a barrel would cost about twenty dollars.

It costs nothing to keep hogs in this country. They forage for themselves both in winter and summer, though they must be fed enough to prevent them from becoming wild. This often happens, however, so that in many places whole droves of wild swine may be seen, which are hunted just like other wild animals. Since it costs so little to keep swine, it is not infrequent that one man has from fifty to a hundred. For that reason, also, pork is eaten at almost every meal.

It is natural that a country which is so sparsely populated should have a great abundance of wild animals. The Indians, who were the former inhabitants, lived entirely by hunting. If a settler is furnished with a good rifle and knows how to use it, he does not have to buy meat the first two years.<sup>54</sup> A good rifle costs from fifteen to twenty dollars. The chief wild animals are deer, prairie chickens, turkeys, ducks, and wild geese. Wild bees are also found. The rivers abound with fish and turtles.

*Illinois* and the other western states are well adapted for fruit culture. Apple trees bear fruit in the fifth or sixth year after they are planted from the seed, and the peach tree as early as the second or third year. It is a good rule to make plans in the very first year for the planting of a fruit garden. Young apple trees cost from three to six cents apiece. Of wild fruit trees I shall name only the *dwarfed hazel*, which is seldom higher than a man, and the black raspberry, which is found everywhere in abundance. *Illinois* lacks sufficient forests for its extensive prairies. The grass on the prairies burns up every year, and thereby hinders the growth of young trees. Prolific woods are found only along the rivers. Most of the timber is oak; though in some places there are also found ash,

<sup>54</sup> For an example of the influence of this bit of advice, see *ante*, n. 32.

elm, walnut, linden, poplar, maple, and so forth. The most difficult problem is to find trees enough for fencing material. In many places, therefore, they have begun to inclose their fields with ditches and walls of sod, as well as by planting black locust trees, which grow very rapidly and increase greatly by ground shoots. Norwegian immigrants ought to bring with them some seed of the Norwegian birch and fir. For the latter there is plenty of sandy and poor soil in certain places. Indiana and Missouri are better supplied with forests than Illinois.

In many places in these states hard coal and salt springs are to be found. On the border between Illinois and Wisconsin territory there are a great many lead mines which belong to the government. Whatever other mineral is found belongs solely to the owner of the ground. Illinois is well supplied with good spring water, something which Missouri to some extent lacks.

The summer in Illinois is much warmer than in Norway. On some days the heat in Norway may be just as intense as it ever is in Illinois or Missouri; but in these states the weather is clearer and brighter. It very seldom rains for a whole day until the end of summer; but when it does rain the downpour is violent and usually accompanied by thunder and lightning. The winter lasts from November until the end of March, at which time the ground usually begins to grow green. February is the coldest month. I have heard many Norwegians declare that they have never felt the cold worse in Norway than in America. Nevertheless, the cattle are generally kept out of doors during the whole winter, and the houses of Americans are not much better than a barn in Norway.

The price of government land has hitherto been \$1.25 an acre, whether the land has been of the best kind or of poorer quality. The price is now going to be lowered and the land divided into three classes according to quality, and the prices will be regulated accordingly. Thus, I have heard that for

land exclusively of the third class, half a dollar an acre will be asked.<sup>55</sup>

An *acre* of land measures about one hundred and four ells on each side.<sup>56</sup> Forty acres, which is the smallest portion that can be bought from the government, is six hundred and sixty ells on each side. A tract of eighty acres is thirteen hundred and twenty ells north and south and six hundred and sixty ells east and west. If one buys two eighty-acre tracts side by side, one has one hundred and sixty acres in a square, and hence thirteen hundred and twenty ells on each side. With the smallest tracts the marks that are set by the government must be followed; but one is permitted to buy, for example, two eighty-acre tracts adjoining each other north and south, or even some distance apart from each other. An American mile is two thousand six hundred and forty ells in length. A *section* is a square which is a mile on each side and which contains eight eighty-acre tracts. A *town* or a *township* comprises thirty-six sections which are arranged as shown in the following figure:

	N						
	6	5	4	3	2	1	
	7	8	9	10	11	12	
W	18	17	16	15	14	13	E
	19	20	21	22	23	24	
	30	29	28	27	26	25	
	31	32	33	34	35	36	
	S						

<sup>55</sup> Proposals to graduate the price of public lands had been before Congress since Benton first introduced his bill in 1824. In Benton's plan,

The sixteenth section in each township is always school land and is the common property of the township. When, therefore, a township has attained a certain number of settlers, they can determine by a majority vote the manner in which the school land shall be used.<sup>57</sup>

It can be seen from the figure that a township measures six miles on each side. The location of a town or township is determined by two numbers, one indicating range and the other, township. That is, one begins to measure from a point toward north or south, and from another toward east or west. For every sixth mile toward north or south there is a new township, and for every sixth mile east or west, a new range.

Where the land has been surveyed by the government, marks and numbers for range, township, and section are found in the corners of all the sections. When one has found these marks for the piece of land which he wishes to buy, he goes to the *land office*, states which piece he wishes to have in the section named, pays the price set by the government, and receives without special payment his certificate or deed of conveyance. The deed is very simple, as will be seen by the following.

changed from time to time in its details, the graduation was based upon the length of time the land had been in the market. Other graduation measures, notably that of Senator Walker of Mississippi, proposed to classify land according to quality. Up to the time of which Rynning writes no plan had secured the approval of Congress. See Raynor G. Wellington, *The Political and Sectional Influence of the Public Lands, 1828-1842*, p. 6, 8, 33, 49, 56, 72.

<sup>56</sup> A Norwegian ell is equivalent to two feet.

<sup>57</sup> Rynning is mistaken in his assertion that the township had authority to decide how the school land should be used. He probably had in mind the provisions of an act regulating the sale of school lands passed by the Illinois legislature, January 22, 1829, and amended by the act of February 15, 1831, whereby on the petition of three fourths of the white male voters of any township containing at least fifty white inhabitants, the school commissioner was authorized to sell section sixteen, the proceeds of such sales to form a part of the township school fund. Illinois, *Laws*, 1829, p. 170-174; 1831, p. 172-176.



Copy.

OFFICE OF THE RECEIVER, DANVILLE, ILLINOIS

January 6, 1838

No. 7885

Received of Ingbrigt Nielson Bredvig of Iroquois County, Illinois, . . . . . the sum of fifty . . . . . dollars . . . . . as full payment for N. W. by W. quarter of section number 14 . . . . . in township number 27 north . . . . . of range number 13 west . . . . . comprising forty . . . . . acres at \$1.25 . . . . . an acre. \$50.00

SAND M. ROBERTS.<sup>58</sup>

Receiver.

When land is purchased from a private individual, who has himself bought earlier from the government, the price will be from two to thirty dollars an acre. Many swindlers are engaged in selling land which they do not own, whereby many strangers have been cheated. The surest and cheapest way is to buy from the government and curtly to dismiss all speculators who, like beasts of prey, lie in wait for the stranger.

The government offers for sale every year only certain tracts. A person can nevertheless cultivate and settle upon land which has not yet been placed on the market, for the settler has the first right to buy it, when it is put up for sale.<sup>59</sup> A piece of land acquired in this way is called a *claim*. To buy

<sup>58</sup> Rynning, in copying the deed, appears to have corrupted the name of Samuel McRoberts, who was receiver of public moneys at the Danville land office from 1832 to 1839.

<sup>59</sup> Rynning here refers to the privilege allowed settlers under the preëemption act of May 29, 1830, of securing title to lands occupied by them previous to their being placed on the market, upon giving satisfactory proof of settlement and improvement and upon the payment of the established minimum price of \$1.25 an acre. This act, originally passed to be in force for one year only, was continued from year to year with slight modifications until the passage of the permanent preëemption act of 1841. Payson J. Treat, *The National Land System, 1785-1820*, p. 383-386 (New York, 1910); Thomas Donaldson, *The Public Domain*, 214 (47 Congress, 2 session, *House Miscellaneous Documents*, no. 45, part 4—serial 2158); George M. Stephenson, *The Political History of the Public Lands from 1840 to 1862*, p. 19-72 (Boston, 1917).



a claim is, therefore, to secure the right to buy the land from the government. Hence a claim is not yet one's property. There are many speculators who enrich themselves by taking up claims and then selling their claim rights.

The prices of cattle and of the necessities of life vary most widely. Here at *Beaver Creek* a fairly good horse costs from fifty to one hundred dollars; a yoke of good working oxen from fifty to eighty dollars; a lumber wagon from sixty to eighty dollars; a milk cow with calf from sixteen to twenty dollars; a sheep two or three dollars; an average-sized pig from six to ten dollars; pork from six to ten cents a pound; butter from twelve to twenty-four cents a pound; a barrel of the finest wheat flour from eight to ten dollars; a barrel of corn meal (meal from maize) from two and one-half to three dollars; a barrel of potatoes one dollar; a pound of coffee twenty cents; a barrel of salt five dollars. In Wisconsin Territory the prices of everything are two or three times higher. Ten Norwegian miles south of us and in Missouri the prices of most things are lower.

Wages are also very different in different places, and correspond closely with the prices of other commodities. In this vicinity a capable workman can earn from one-half to one dollar a day in winter, and almost twice as much in summer. Yearly wages are from one hundred and fifty to two hundred dollars. A servant girl gets from one to two dollars a week, and has no outside work except to milk the cows. In Wisconsin Territory daily wages are from three to five dollars; in New Orleans and Texas wages are also very high, but in Missouri, again, they are lower. At *Beaver Creek* we can now get men to break prairie for us at two dollars an acre, provided that we furnish board.<sup>60</sup> For fencing ten acres with the

<sup>60</sup> In his journal, dated at *Beaver Creek*, Illinois, on February 21, 1838, Ole Nattestad says that he has had work since October 14, and in four months has earned fifty dollars. He also states that he has been offered one hundred and ninety dollars a year, together with board "as good as any official has in Norway"; that a workingman can earn from

simplest kind of fencing we figure on two thousand rails. In an average woods a good workman can split a hundred or a hundred and fifty rails a day. From one-half to one dollar is charged for splitting a hundred rails. Four thousand rails are required to fence in forty acres; and for one hundred and sixty acres eight thousand rails are needed, all figuring being based upon the simplest kind of fence.

7. What kind of religion is to be found in America? Is there any kind of order or government in the land, or can every one do as he pleases?

Among the common people in Norway it has been a general belief that pure heathenism prevails in America, or, still worse, that there is no religion. This is not the case. Every one can believe as he wishes, and worship God in the manner which he believes to be right, but he must not persecute any one for holding another faith. The government takes it for granted that a compulsory belief is no belief at all, and that it will be best shown who has religion or who has not if there is complete religious liberty.

The *Christian religion* is the prevailing one in America; but on account of the self-conceit and opinionativeness of the teachers of religion in minor matters, there are a great many sects, which agree, however, in the main points.<sup>61</sup> Thus, one hears of Catholics, Protestants, Lutherans, Calvinists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Quakers, Methodists, and many others. There are also various sects among the Norwegians, but they do not as yet have ministers and churches. Every man who is

twelve to sixteen dollars a month in winter, and almost twice as much in summer; and that a girl can earn from one to two dollars a week if she has some knowledge of English. *Beskrivelse*, 30, 31; translation by Anderson in *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 1:186. On the matter of wages see also Rynning's eleventh chapter.

<sup>61</sup> Nattestad in his *Beskrivelse*, 28, makes a similar statement: "As far as religious sects are concerned, there are many kinds, and I have as yet little knowledge of their teachings; but as far as I can understand them, they almost all believe in one true God."

somewhat earnest in his belief holds devotional exercises in his own home, or else together with his neighbors.

I have already said that the United States has no king. Nevertheless, there is always a man who exercises just about as much authority as a king. This man is chosen for a term of only four years, and is called *president*. In matters which concern all the United States as a whole, the legislative power is vested in the *Congress*, which is composed of men who are elected by the various states. Each of the separate states has its own government, just as Norway and Sweden have, but their common Congress, their common language, and a common financial system unite them more closely. The number of the United States is at present twenty-seven.

For the comfort of the faint-hearted I can, therefore, declare with truth that here, as in Norway, there are laws, government, and authorities. But everything is designed to maintain the natural freedom and equality of men. In regard to the former, every one is free to engage in whatever honorable occupation he wishes, and to go wherever he wishes without having to produce a passport, and without being detained by customs officials. Only the real criminal is threatened with punishment by the law.

In writings the sole purpose of which seems to be to find something in America which can be criticized, I have read that the American is faithless, deceitful, hard-hearted, and so forth. I will not deny that such folk are to be found in America, as well as in other places, and that the stranger can never be too careful; but it has been my experience that the American as a general rule is easier to get along with than the Norwegian, more accommodating, more obliging, more reliable in all things. The oldest Norwegian immigrants have assured me of the same thing. Since it is so easy to support oneself honorably, thieving and burglary are almost unknown.

An ugly contrast to this freedom and equality which justly constitute the pride of the Americans is the infamous *slave*

*traffic*, which still is tolerated and flourishes in the southern states. Here is found a race of black people, with woolly hair on their heads, who are called *negroes*, and who are brought here from Africa, which is their native country; these poor beings are bought and sold in the southern states just as other property, and are driven to work with a whip or scourge like horses or oxen. If a master whips his slave to death or shoots him dead in a rage, he is not looked upon as a murderer. The children born of a negress are slaves from birth, even if their father is a white man. The slave trade is still permitted in Missouri; but it is strictly forbidden and despised in Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin Territory. The northern states try in every Congress to get the slave trade abolished in the southern states; but as the latter always oppose these efforts, and appeal to their right to settle their internal affairs themselves, there will in all likelihood soon come either a separation between the northern and southern states, or else bloody civil disputes.<sup>62</sup>

The *taxes* in America are very low. I have heard of only two kinds of taxes here; namely, land tax and property tax. No land tax is paid during the first five years after land has been bought from the government. The property tax amounts to half a dollar on every hundred one owns in money or in chattels. Every man over twenty-one years owes the state four days of road work yearly.

In the event of war every man is in duty bound to bear arms for his country. In times of peace there is freedom from military service.

<sup>62</sup> This passage, written twenty-three years before the outbreak of the Civil War, foreshadows accurately the position that the Norwegian immigrants were to take on the issues involved in the slavery controversy. It presages their affiliation with the Free Soil Party, and, later, the Republican Party, an affiliation that was to last long after the echoes of the great sectional conflict had died away. Furthermore, Rynning's views are representative of those of the great mass of Norwegian immigrants, an important fact in accounting for the tendency of these immigrants to go to the North and the Northwest, rather than to the South.

8. What provisions are made for the education of children, and for the care of poor people?

It has already been pointed out that the sixteenth section in every township is reserved as school land, and that the inhabitants of the township can themselves determine its use. Public education, indeed, is within the reach of all, just as any other thing; but it by no means follows that there is, therefore, indifference in regard to the education of the children. The American realizes very well what an advantage the educated man has over the ignorant, and he spares nothing in the instruction and education of his children. Nevertheless, I have met some elderly men who could neither read nor write. Two schools have now been started among the Norwegians at Fox River, where the children learn English; but the Norwegian language seems to be destined to die out with the parents. At least, the children do not learn to read Norwegian. At Beaver Creek no school is yet established, but most of the children who are old enough are taken into American homes, where their instruction is usually well cared for.<sup>63</sup>

In this state I have not yet seen a beggar. The able-bodied man is in no danger of poverty or need. By an excellent system of poor relief care is taken of those who are really needy. If a widow is left in straitened circumstances, the children are not taken away from the mother and made parish paupers as in Norway; but generous help is given to the mother for the support of both herself and her children, and for the schooling of the latter.<sup>64</sup>

9. What language is spoken in America? Is it difficult to learn?

Since so many people stream into the United States from all the European countries, one must expect to find just as many

<sup>63</sup> See also Reiersen's account of the schools in the Norwegian settlements. *Veiviser*, 153, 155; translation in Norwegian-American Historical Association, *Studies and Records*, 1: 114-115.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Reiersen on the Norwegian settlements. Norwegian-American Historical Association, *Studies and Records*, 1: 118-122.



different languages in use. But the *English language* predominates everywhere.

Ignorance of the language is, to be sure, a handicap for Norwegian immigrants. It is felt especially on the trip to the interior of the country, if there is no one in the party who understands English. But by daily association with Americans one will learn enough in two or three months to get along well. Some half-grown children who came over last summer already speak very good English. Before having learned the language fairly well, one must not expect to receive so large daily or yearly wages as the native-born Americans.

#### 10. Is there considerable danger from disease in America?

Is there reason to fear wild animals and the Indians?

I shall not conceal the fact that the unaccustomed climate usually causes *some kind of sickness* among new settlers *during the first year*. Diarrhea or the ague afflicts almost every one; but if a regular diet is observed, these sicknesses are seldom dangerous, and Nature helps herself best without medicine. The ague seldom returns unless one has attempted to drive it away by quack medical treatment.

There are no dangerous beasts of prey in this part of the country. The prairie wolf is not larger than a fox; but still it is harmful to the extent that it often destroys pigs, lambs, and chickens. *Snakes* are *numerous* here, but small; and few of them are poisonous.<sup>65</sup> The most poisonous kind is the *rattlesnake*; but even that is not nearly so venomous as many in Norway believe. I know two instances of persons being

<sup>65</sup> Among the many rumors about America that were circulated in Norway, in many cases with the express purpose of checking emigration, was the one that there existed great danger from poisonous snakes. The views of the Reverend Jens Rynning, father of Ole Rynning, on this point are brought out in the tabular comparison of Norway and America quoted *ante*, p. 19. For a typical statement setting forth the perils to be encountered in the new world, among which venomous snakes are especially mentioned, see the narrative of Gullik K. Laugen, an emigrant from Numedal in 1839, as given by Nilsson in *Billed-Magazin*, 1: 171.



bitten by rattlesnakes, and in both cases the patients were cured by simple household remedies. Everywhere that the rattlesnake is to be found, a kind of grass grows which is usually regarded as the best antidote for its bite. One of the Norwegians who came here earliest has told me that he was once bitten by a rattlesnake, and that he found the application of dry camphor to be the most efficacious remedy for relieving the swelling.

The *Indians* have now been transported away from this part of the country far to the west. Nowhere in Illinois is there any longer danger from assault by them. Besides, these people are very good-natured, and never begin hostilities when they are not affronted. They never harm the Quakers, whom they call *Father Penn's children*.<sup>66</sup>

II. For what kind of people is it advisable to emigrate to America, and for whom is it not advisable? — Caution against unreasonable expectations.

From all that I have experienced so far, the industrious Norwegian peasant or mechanic, as well as the good tradesman, can soon earn enough in America to provide sufficient means for a livelihood. I have already spoken of the price of government land, and I shall merely add that I know several bachelors who have saved two hundred dollars clear within a year's time by ordinary labor. Blacksmiths are everywhere in demand. A smith who understands his trade can feel assured that his neighbors, in whatever place he settles, will help him build his house and smithy, and will even lend him enough money to furnish himself with bellows and tools. Two dollars or more is charged here for shoeing a horse; a dollar for an iron wedge; a dollar for a hay fork; and so forth. Competent tailors can also command a steady and good income, and like-

<sup>66</sup> Laugen, in his list of the perils of the new world, includes also the "yet more dangerous Indians." Nilsson in *Billed-Magazin*, 1: 171. Rynning's reference to Quakers is possibly added for the purpose of reassuring the Norwegian adherents of this sect.

wise the shoemaker; but the latter will have to learn his trade anew, for here the soles of the shoes are pegged instead of being sewed. Turners, carpenters, and wagon-makers can also make a good living from their trades. An itinerant trader who is quick and of good habits can become a rich man within a short time, but he must not be afraid *to undergo hardships and to camp outdoors night after night*. Servant girls can easily secure work, and find very good places. Women are respected and honored far more than is the case among common people in Norway. So far as I know, only two or three Norwegian girls have been married to Americans, and I do not believe that they have made particularly good matches. But there are many Norwegian bachelors who would prefer to marry Norwegian girls if they could.

Those desiring to emigrate to America should also carefully consider whether they have *sufficient means* to pay their expenses. I would not advise any one to go who, when he lands upon American soil, does not have at least several dollars in his possession. I believe that young people who have enough to pay their passage from *New York* to *Rochester* are in a position to emigrate. That will require about four or five dollars. Those who have large families should have enough left to pay their way as far as Illinois, where land is cheap and where plenty of work can be secured at high wages. Expenses for each adult from Norway to Illinois must be figured at about sixty dollars, in addition to expenses for board across the sea. If one goes on Norwegian ships the cost of the passage is just as much for children as for adults. It can be estimated, therefore, that forty-five dollars in all will be spent for children between two and twelve years old, and thirty dollars for children under two years.<sup>67</sup> Those who do not have enough to pay their way can hire out to some one who is in better circumstances, and pledge themselves to work for him,

<sup>67</sup> See Rynning's chapter 13, *post*. According to Flom "the price of passage ranged between 33 and 50 *speciedaler*, that is between \$25.00 and \$38.00." *Norwegian Immigration*, 223-225. See also Langeland, *Nord-mændene i Amerika*, 25; Nilsson in *Billed-Magasin*, 1: 7, 94, 388.

for example, three years for fifty dollars a year. This will be to the mutual advantage of both parties. He who thus proposes to pay the traveling expenses of others must see to it that he does not pay out so much as to be embarrassed himself, and that he does not take with him bad or incapable people. An employee who has come to America through such an arrangement ought to compare his pay and prospects here with what he had in Norway, and thereby be induced to fulfill the engagement upon which he has entered, for he is held by no other bond than that of his own integrity.

People whom I do not advise to go to America are (1) *drunkards*, who will be detested, and will soon perish miserably;<sup>68</sup> (2) those who *neither can work nor have sufficient money to carry on a business*, for which purpose, however, an individual does not need more than four to five hundred dollars. Of *the professional classes* doctors and druggists are most likely to find employment; but I do not advise even such persons to go unless they understand at least how to use oxen, or have learned a trade, for example, that of a tailor.

Many go to America with such unreasonable expectations and ideas that they necessarily must find themselves disappointed. The first stumbling block, ignorance of the language, is enough to dishearten many at once. *The person who neither can nor will work must never expect that riches and luxurious living will be open to him. No, in America one gets nothing without work; but it is true that by work one can expect some day to achieve better circumstances.* Many of the newcomers have been shocked by the wretched huts which are the first dwellings of the settlers; but those good people should consider that when they move into an uncultivated land they can not find houses ready for them. Before the land has been put into such shape that it can support a man, it is hardly wise to put money into costly dwelling-houses.

<sup>68</sup> Nattestad also in his journal tells of warnings against the evils of intemperance which are everywhere preached in America, and of the low esteem in which men who drink to excess are held. *Beskrivelse*, 28.

12. What particular dangers is one likely to encounter on the ocean? Is it true that those who are taken to America are sold as slaves?

Many regard the trip across the ocean as so terribly dangerous that this one apprehension alone is enough to confine them forever to their native country. Of course, solid ground is safer than the sea; but people commonly imagine the dangers to be greater than they really are. So far as I know, no ship with Norwegian emigrants for America has yet been wrecked. Even with a good ship, an able captain, and capable, orderly, and careful seamen, the passenger has to trust in the Lord. He can guide you securely across the stormy sea, and He can find you in your safe home, whenever His hour has come!

Two things about the sea voyage are very disagreeable; namely, *seasickness* and *tediousness*. I do not think there is any unfailing remedy for seasickness, but it is not a fatal illness. Small children suffer the least from it; women, especially middle-aged wives, often suffer considerably from it. The only alleviating remedy I know of is a good supply of *different kinds of food* for varying the diet. I have noted particularly that barley gruel flavored with wine is frequently strengthening and helpful in this sickness. It is well to prepare against tediousness by taking along *good books*, and something with which to occupy oneself. For this purpose I advise taking along *harpoons* and other *fishing tackle* as well.

A silly rumor was believed by many in Norway; namely, that those who wished to emigrate to America were taken to Turkey and sold as slaves. This rumor is absolutely groundless.<sup>69</sup> It is true, however, that many who have not been able

<sup>69</sup> By the irony of circumstance Rynning's own father was one of those who gave currency to the rumor that free white men might be made slaves in America. In a Norwegian newspaper he wrote, "One must remember that" in the southern states "there are not only black but also white slaves, and that anyone whom a native seeks as a slave must prove that he is not one, or else be held in slavery for the rest of his life." *Morgenbladet*, 1839, no. 283. That such rumors were current is also confirmed in accounts by other immigrants, given by Nilsson in

themselves to pay for their passage, have come only in this way: they have sold themselves or their service for a certain number of years to some man here in this country. Many are said thereby to have fallen into bad hands, and to have been treated no better than slaves. No Norwegian, so far as I know, has fallen into such circumstances,\* nor is that to be feared if one crosses by Norwegian ships, and with his own countrymen.<sup>70</sup>

\* All Norwegians who have been in America for a considerable length of time and who have been respectable and industrious, have fared well. Many have come over by an arrangement whereby other Norwegians have paid for them, but have nevertheless been fully as much their own masters. After a short time they have usually worked out their debt.

---

*Billed-Magazin*, 1: 83, 226, 388. Following the receipt of letters from those who had emigrated to America and the distribution throughout Norway of the printed narratives of Rynning, Nattestad, and Reiersen, the fears aroused in the simple-minded *bønder* by these ridiculous reports were gradually dissipated. By no means all the Norwegian immigrants, however, were worried by these stories of slavery. Gitle Danielson, for example, who came over in 1839, on hearing that there was danger of being taken to the South into slavery, is reported to have said: "Norwegians or Scandinavians in general are not the kind of people of which to make slaves. I have never heard of any Scandinavians ever being slaves to a foreign race. . . . That we, the sons of the brave and hardy Northmen, can be enslaved alive by an open and visible enemy, is incredible! The slave owners do not want us to go down south, for they know we would talk of freedom and justice to the slaves and in time produce a change of opinion." Quoted by John E. Molee in Anderson, *First Chapter of Norwegian Immigration*, 311. Those Norwegians who did go south before the Civil War appear to have accepted the institution of slavery as they found it without much question, however. Cleng Peerson in 1850 urged the Norwegian immigrants to establish settlements in Texas and passed by the question of slavery without a mention. *Democraten*, September 7, 1850; cf. Blegen, "Cleng Peerson and Norwegian Immigration," in *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 7: 324. If many of those who went to the South adapted themselves to the situation that they found in the slave states, there can be no doubt, on the other hand, that deep-rooted hostility to slavery was one of the chief reasons why the majority of the immigrants avoided the South.

<sup>70</sup> For an early example of a wealthy Norwegian paying the passage of many of his poorer countrymen, see Nilsson in *Billed-Magazin*, 1: 388.



## 13. Guiding advice for those who wish to go to America.

When persons wish to emigrate to America singly, they can not expect to chance upon opportunity for sailing direct from Norway, inasmuch as this country has no commerce with the United States. They must go, therefore, either to *Gothenburg*,\* Sweden, *Bremen*, Germany, or *Havre*, France. From all these places there is frequent opportunity to secure passage to the United States, and the fare is usually less than from Norway. But when several wish to emigrate at the same time, I should rather advise them to go on Norwegian ships and with Norwegian seamen, because they will feel safer. For the same reason it is also best to go with a captain who has previously been in America; for example, Captain *Behrens* of Bergen, whom I can recommend as an able man, or one of the captains who have conveyed passengers from Stavanger to New York.

When several wish to emigrate together, they must apply to a broker in the nearest seaport, who will help them to bargain for the cheapest fare. They must investigate carefully whether the ship is a good sailing vessel and in good condition. With reference to the bargain it may be remarked that the fare on Norwegian ships has hitherto been thirty dollars, for children as well as adults. From the ports of other countries the fare for adults is generally less, sometimes only twenty dollars; and for children under twelve years either half of that or nothing.

The *charter*, or the written contract, ought to be as precise and detailed as possible. It ought to be written both in English and Norwegian. I shall name some particular provisions that ought not to be omitted: (a) The captain (or the owners) are to supply *wood* and *water* for twelve weeks. The water is to be provided in good casks, so that it will not spoil,

\* Some bachelors from Nummedal went last summer from Gothenburg to Newport, Rhode Island. They spent only thirty-two days in crossing the ocean, and praise their Captain *Rönneberg* highly.



and three quarts are to be measured out to each passenger daily. If the water in some casks is spoiled, the good water is to be used up before beginning with the bad, and the captain shall take water for his own use from the same barrel as the passengers. (b) The passengers, indeed, must supply themselves with provisions, but the captain shall see to it *that every one takes with him sufficient provisions for twelve weeks*. The passengers must also furnish their own light. (c) For the sum agreed upon the captain shall *land the passengers at the destination determined upon* without any additional expense to them,\* either under the name of landing money, quarantine money, corporation money, gratuities, or the like. (d) The fare is to be paid in advance and a receipt given which is written both in English and Norwegian. If the captain on his own risk takes along any one who has not paid in full the sum agreed upon, then he has no further right to demand more as soon as he has taken the passenger and his baggage aboard. (The last provision is a safeguard against having the captain take aboard any one who, on account of his poverty, will either become a burden to the rest or else be given up to the arbitrariness of the captain.)

I should advise every one who goes to America to exchange his money for silver and gold, and *not take a draft*. Spanish piasters are worth as much as American dollars, but five French francs are six cents less. In an American dollar there are one hundred cents, and each cent is equivalent to a Norwegian *skilling*. There are twelve pence or twelve and one-half cents in a shilling. In America there are silver coins which are worth one half, one fourth, one eighth, one tenth, one sixteenth, and one twentieth of a dollar. The smallest coin current in Illinois equals six and one-fourth cents. All kinds of silver or gold coins are accepted in America; Nor-

\* This provision is very necessary; for otherwise an unscrupulous captain, under one pretext or another, might demand an additional sum from his passengers and, by virtue of his authority and because of their ignorance and unfamiliarity with the language, might force them to pay it.

wegian *silver coins*, indeed, that are less than half a dollar, are disposed of with considerable profit.

The best time to leave Norway is so early in the spring as to be able to reach the place of settlement by midsummer or shortly after that time. In that way something can be raised even the first year; namely, buckwheat, which is planted in the last days of June; turnips, which are planted in the latter part of July; and potatoes. It is very unfortunate to go too late in the year to gather fodder for one or two cows and build a house for the winter.

I believe that the best route is to go by way of New York, just as most of the other immigrants do. It is doubtless cheaper and quicker to go by way of New Orleans; but it is too warm and unhealthful there in the summer, and it is not advisable to immigrate at any other time of the year to unbroken land without houses. I must also remark that New Orleans is noted for having the worst people in the United States.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>71</sup> The extra paragraphs in the 1839 edition of Rynning's book as given by Anderson (see *ante*, n. 38) are herewith presented in translation:

Hitherto the Norwegian immigrants have always sought passage to New York. From there to Chicago the least expensive way is to go by steamer up the Hudson River to Albany; from Albany to Buffalo by canal boat, which is drawn by horses; from Buffalo by steamer over Lakes Erie, St. Clair, Huron, and Michigan, to Chicago. From here the route goes by land, either south to Beaver Creek, or west to Fox River. From New York to Buffalo one can get transportation for from three to four dollars with baggage, and from Buffalo to Chicago for from nine to twelve dollars. From Chicago to Beaver Creek drivers from Wabash usually ask one dollar for every hundred pounds. Every contract with the steamboat companies or drivers should be written, and with the greatest particularity, if one does not wish to be cheated. To be on the safe side one should figure that it will take about thirty dollars for every adult from New York to Beaver Creek or Fox River. For children between two and twelve years of age half of that is always paid, and nothing for children under two years or who are still carried in arms. The route mentioned from New York to Beaver Creek I compute to be about two hundred and fifty Norwegian miles.

One of our party who arrived last fall did not take the steamboat from Buffalo any farther than to Toledo on Lake Erie. Here he bought a horse and wagon, and conveyed his luggage to Beaver Creek himself. In this way he and his family traveled to their destination somewhat cheaply, but they were also a good deal longer on the way than those who took the steamboat.

For those who wish to go to Missouri,\* unquestionably the quickest and cheapest route is by way of New Orleans. But it must be noted in

Those who wish to emigrate to America ought to take with them (a) bedclothes, and clothing of fur and of wadmol,<sup>72</sup> as well as stamped wadmol; (b) a *baxtehelle*,<sup>73</sup> a spinning wheel, and, if possible, a hand mill, silverware, and some tobacco pipes to sell. (c) A mechanic ought to take his tools with him. (d) Some good rifles with percussion locks, partly for personal use, partly for sale. I have already said that in America a good rifle costs from fifteen to twenty dollars.

The *provisions* for the sea voyage should include a supply of every kind of food which can be kept a long time without being spoiled. One ought to take with him pork, dried meat, salted meat, dried herring, smoked herring, dried fish, butter, cheese, primost,<sup>74</sup> milk, beer, flour, peas, cereals, potatoes, rye rusks, coffee, tea, sugar, pots, pans, and kettles. *It is best to take along into the interior* whatever is not used on the ocean voyage, since no charge is made for carrying provisions on steam and canal boats.

this connection (1) that one can seldom go to New Orleans except in ships which are sheathed with copper, and (2) that New Orleans is very unhealthful and insalubrious, except from the beginning of December until April. But this is the worst time of the year to be without houses — which is the usual fate of settlers.

\* According to the assurance of Kleng Peerson, who knows the country best, and who from the beginning has been the guide of the Norwegians, Missouri is the state where it is now most advisable for immigrants to go. They must then go first to St. Louis on the Mississippi, from there to Marion City, and from there to "the Norwegian settlement on North River, Shelby County."

No contemporary evidence has come to light on the reasons for the change from the text of Rynning's 1838 edition. Though it might be conjectured that the paragraphs given above were added by someone in Norway after the first edition had appeared, internal evidence seems to show that they were written before Ansten Nattestad went to Norway with the Rynning manuscript. The phrase "One of our party who arrived last fall" certainly refers to the immigrant party of 1837. The passage therefore must have been written not later than the fall of 1838. This fact, coupled with the style of the passage, leads the present writer to think that it was written by Rynning. Why it did not appear in the first edition is not known.

<sup>72</sup> A coarse hairy woolen cloth similar to freize.

<sup>73</sup> A round iron plate used by Norwegians in baking *fladbröd* (flat-bread).

<sup>74</sup> A cheese made from skim milk.



For medicinal purposes one should bring (a) a little brandy, vinegar, and a couple of bottles of wine, as well as raisins and prunes to make soup for the seasick; (b) a cathartic for constipation, which often occurs on the ocean. This medicine should not be used unless badly needed, however. (c) Sulphur powder and ointment for the itch. Directions must be secured from the druggist or from a physician as to how to use this medicine. (d) Hoffman's drops and spirits of camphor.

For purposes of cleanliness it is necessary to take (a) linen for change, (b) salt-water soap for washing, and (c) good fine combs.

Again I must advise every one to provide something with which to employ himself on the voyage, as fishing tackle, thread for knitting fish-nets, and other similar articles.

It is a good thing if the immigrants can have a dependable guide and interpreter on the trip from New York to the interior. For those who wish to leave next spring,\* there is a good opportunity to go with *Ansten Knudsen Nattestad* from Rolloug parish in Nummedal, who is now on a trip back to Norway.

\* Namely in the spring of 1839.

E184.S2N829  
Blegen

Ole Rynning's True Account of  
America.

21749

DATE

ISSUED TO

2 1961

*Hedlin*

APR 14 1961

*Helmke*

*LSTC*

*10*

Return this book on or before the last  
date stamped below

E184

.S2N829

21749





C0-ACA-076